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# Backstreets

THE BOSS MAGAZINE

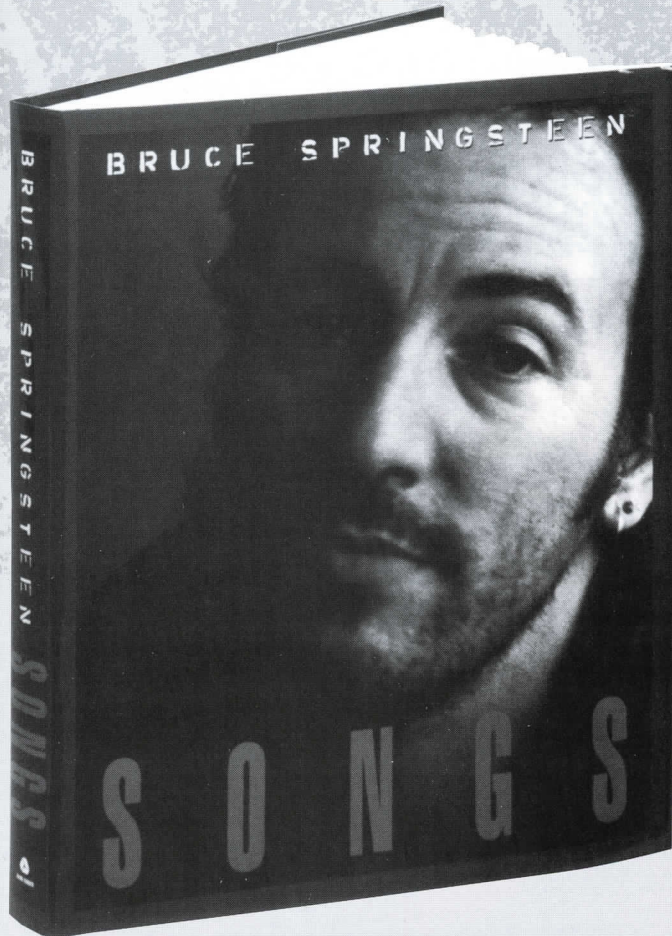
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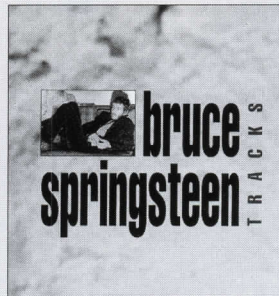
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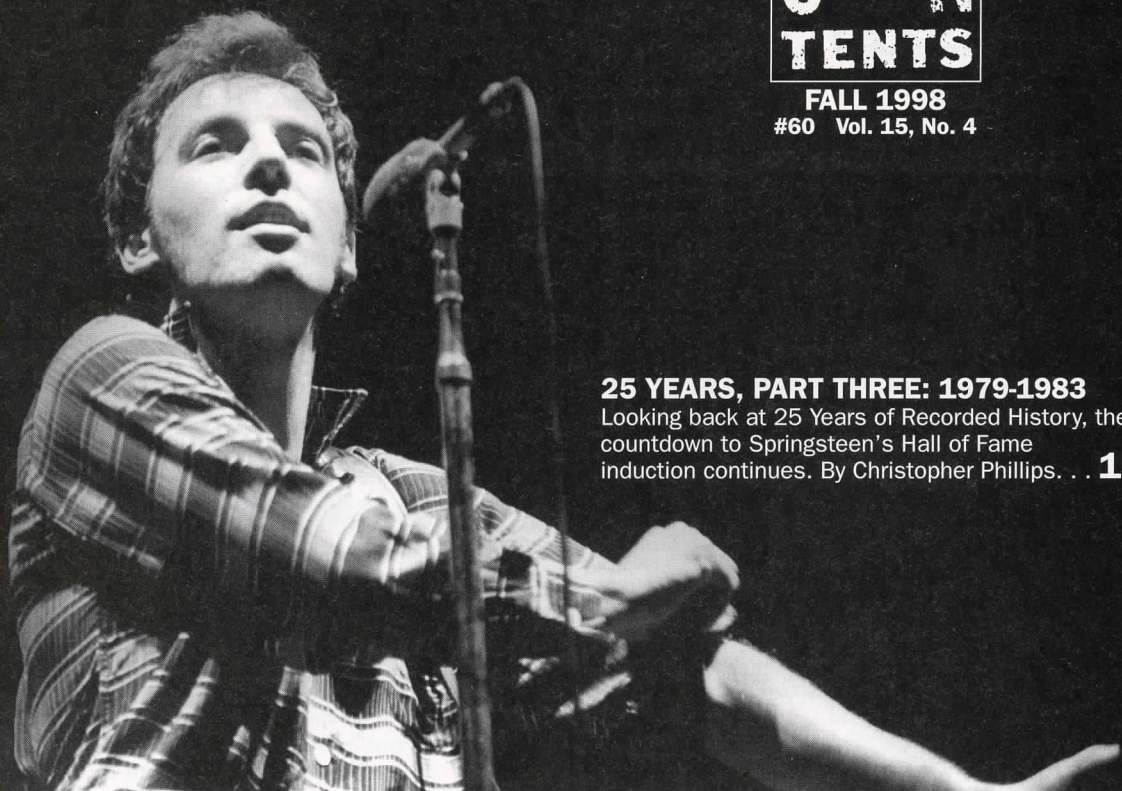
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and gets to work.



**CON  
TENTS**

FALL 1998  
#60 Vol. 15, No. 4

## 25 YEARS, PART THREE: 1979-1983

Looking back at 25 Years of Recorded History, the  
countdown to Springsteen's Hall of Fame  
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# Backstreets

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### BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

*The River* tour, 1980 - 1981  
Lawrence Kirsch Photo

## OFF THE WALL

### BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

*The River* tour, 1980 - 1981  
Lawrence Kirsch Photo



# LETTERS

## THE WISH

Dear Editor:

"It's four in the morning and raining. I'm 27 today, feeling old, listening to my records, and remembering that things were different a decade ago." —Jon Landau

Yes, things really were different a decade ago. When I read Jon Landau's article for the first time in 1989, I was wondering how someone could feel old on his 27th birthday.

A decade ago I bought *Tunnel of Love*. It was my second Bruce album. Yes, it was good, but I couldn't understand all the words and stories. My first Bruce's album was, obviously, *Born in the USA*. Big smash in my homeland, too (at that time Croatia was part of the Yugoslavian Federation). Since then Bruce has not been so famous in Croatia. In 1989 I read a biography about Bruce, thanks to Dragan Todorović for his great book called *Tajfun zvan Bruce* ("A Typhoon/Tornado Named Bruce"). In this book, where there were many translations of his songs, I discovered Bruce as a songwriter. Only then did I understand the real meaning of

"Born in the USA." But the songs that had most influence on me were "The River," "Wreck on the Highway" and, almost my hymn, "Born to Run."

After reading this book I began to search for older albums. In 1995 in Rome, on an excursion with my friends from Pula University, I found them all. Why so late? Bruce didn't release any new albums from 1988 until 1992, and so it was very difficult to find any titles at all. In 1992 came *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town*. A possible concert in Croatia in 1993, obviously, was out of the question because of the war—in the early '90s, the war exploded in former Yugoslavia. On the Istrian peninsula, the region of Croatia where I live, the war was "only" on TV, but it seemed like that the words "The war is over!" would never come.

All these years I have listened to Bruce's albums and hoped to enjoy some concert, in peacetime. But the *Tom Joad* theatres were too small for all those people who wanted to hear Bruce live. Milano, Italy, was my only chance, but to even get one ticket was impossible.

*The Ghost of Tom Joad* was not a "Bruuuuce!" album, but I like this album very much. Obviously, I

had to find John Steinbeck's book *The Grapes of Wrath* and read it—it is one of my favorite books.

And now, a box set! I hope a tour, too—with one date in Croatia, at least. It would be for the first time. The 3000-year-old City of Pula ([www.gradpula.com](http://www.gradpula.com)) has a beautiful arena. Since 1996 we have seen Sting, Vanessa Mae, Jose Carreras, Julio Iglesias, The Kelly family, Jon Bon Jovi, James Brown... and now we are waiting for Bruce!

I began this letter with a quote from Jon Landau's article. I couldn't understand his feelings when I first read it. Well, I understand him now. I will "celebrate" my 27th birthday on October 31st. Techno, rave, and house music vs. Bruce, Dylan, Bon Jovi, etc., plus the everyday—"just the working life"—and I am feeling old. But I am still feeling born to run, too. And, for me, the future of rock 'n' roll is still Bruce Springsteen.

Dean Matosevic  
Pula, Croatia

## LOOSE ENDS

Dear Editor:

I'm extremely grateful that Bruce has decided to release the

*Tracks* box set. However, I can't believe he's holding back on three jewels: "Cindy," "Follow That Dream," and "From Small Things (Big Things One Day Come)."

I wonder if Bruce plans on releasing selected songs from the set as CD-singles, with some of these missing tunes on the singles? I realize mail is probably pouring in about what songs were left off. Add my three to the wish list!

Chuck Parker  
Salinas, CA

## OVER THE RISE

Dear Editor:

It was interesting to read the interview with "Big Danny," especially his views on the comparison between Dublin and Asbury Park. Politically, things have moved on very positively in Northern Ireland over recent years, but we still have work to do. It's good to know that my hometown receives good thoughts from people all over the world. Keep an eye on us—we're on the road to real peace, but we still need the goodwill of the international community and especially the US.

After the recent referendum vote, a celebratory Elton John gig was announced. One of the Belfast daily papers carried a front page story, complete with photo, that Bruce was going to join him on stage in Belfast. The report said that Tony Blair—a known Bruce fan—had asked him to come over to help celebrate the peace. It all seemed very unlikely and of course did not happen. Quite a shock though to even read the speculation.

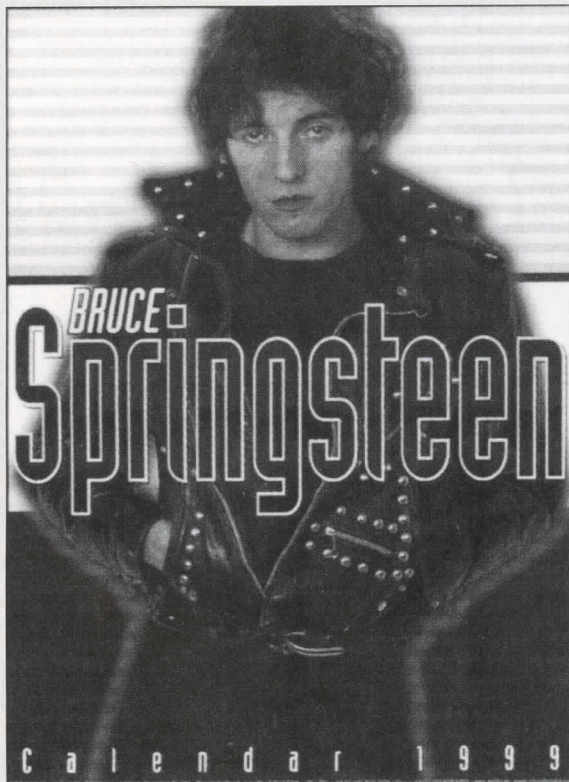
Good to see Van the Man is on your turntable—*The Philosophers Stone* is a brilliant collection of songs. Almost enough to keep me going until "our" own box set comes out.

Brendan Mulgrew  
Belfast

## DON'T YOU LOSE HEART

Dear Editor:

I've just read Lucia Folle's letter ["Blood and Glass"] in issue 59 of your magazine and am glad to know that there are Bruce Tramps out there whose faith runs as deep as mine. I've only



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been with Bruce for two years, but it feels like my whole life. I am the only person I know who's into Bruce, that's why it's always nice to get views of other *real* fans because I've never really met any.

I am 19 and most of the people around me are into British chart crap—boy bands and the Spice Girls. Bruce has inspired me so greatly throughout the last two years and I've become a totally heavy fan of his music. When I failed to get in to the university of my choice and when I failed my first driving test, both last year, I just listened to "Janey Don't You Lose Heart" and cried into my pillow. At those moments this song never made so much sense. It's very special to me, as is everything Bruce sings.

The last four years have proved trying for me, and the failures I mention above are the result of the stress I've been through. My mother fell very ill and became so bad that she stayed in hospital for a whole year. I was only 15 when this happened, and at first I thought I was coping but I also didn't realize how much I was being dragged into an invisible black hole.

This became more evident later when my dad became depressed because of the stress he was under. It was a terrible time and I then discovered Bruce who made me happier (than I had been in awhile) and hopeful and gave me a reason to believe again. As Lucia said, Bruce has also helped me more than any one person in real life.

When my mum came home things weren't perfect. Everyone was still down. I, for one was really down in the dumps—permanently, it seemed. I would hardly socialize, I'd just go to school and come home. Things just weren't the same in school or at home. I cried myself to sleep and couldn't stop feeling sorry for myself.

Then one day something hit home. It was Bruce, but not a song; it was a quote he once said. He said: "I think you can make anything happen. That's my approach. To blame something on your job is an excuse, no matter what it is. It can make it difficult, no doubt about it. But in the end, you do what you want to do. That's what I basically believe. All the rest is excuses."

Now, I am about to start the second year of my university course and I feel a lot more content. I am getting involved and doing things instead of sitting around doing jack. Family life is okay too, and although my mum isn't 100% better we're really getting through it all. My overall attitude I think has added a lot of support to my family in general. Bruce gave me a spiritual kick to the head which didn't just help me, but my whole family. He's still helping me and I love him so much.

Miss Herpreet Kaur Grewal  
Ilford, Essex, England

## WHERE THE BANDS ARE

Dear Editor:

We are sick to our stomachs that the E Street Band is not getting inducted [into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame] along with Bruce Springsteen. The E Streeters played an important supporting role in the career of Bruce Springsteen. We know Bruce wrote all the songs—but so did John Fogerty, and his whole band was inducted. We know that "Born to Run" is the song sent to voters, but not only are they hearing Bruce at his best, but also the E Street Band at their best. Who else could keep up with Bruce during his marathon concerts the way the E Street Band did? The E Street Band should be riding Bruce's wave into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Dominic and Vincent Pennisi  
via e-mail

## THIS HARD LAND

Dear Editor:

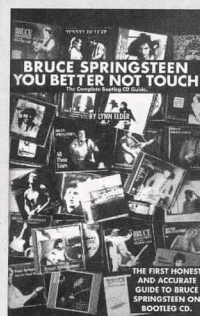
I just got my first issue of *Backstreets* last week, and I wanted to thank you for the article on Dan Bern. Living in rural Wisconsin, it's very hard to stay current with cool happenings in the music world. Based on your article I went out and bought *Fifty Eggs*, Bern's latest album, and I was not disappointed. I would like to return the favor by telling you and your readers about another new artist, Mary Cutrufello, who just released her major label debut, *When the Night is Through*. This album blew me away. Any Springsteen fan will love this album. I'm looking forward to

Continued page 34

# YOU BETTER NOT TOUCH

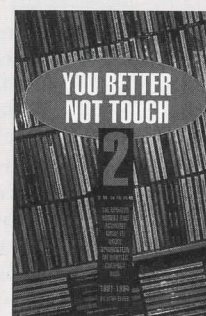
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We said until we died, we'd always be...

## Blood Brothers

By Charles R. Cross

**O**n March 15, 1999, Bruce Springsteen will receive arguably the highest honor that any rock 'n' roll artist can achieve when he is inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Though the balloting is not yet completed, Springsteen will most assuredly be voted in this year—as sure as Mark McGwire will eventually make it to Cooperstown. Bruce will stand up on the podium at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York to thunderous applause, and for one moment all will be right in the world.

Springsteen deserves the honor, deserves to have his named etched and back-lit for all to see, in a hallway alongside Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, and Bob Dylan. Even without this formal honor, Springsteen's place in history was already well-established; he crossed over to the world of rock 'n' roll greats many moons ago. His achievements and work will be remembered for years, decades, maybe millenniums to come. This magazine is part of that legacy, and exists because there is a cadre of fans who have been touched and united by Springsteen's artistic work.

But when Springsteen is honored by the Hall of Fame early next year, in all likelihood he will be inducted without the E Street Band. The ballot sent out to voters lists Springsteen as a solo nominee and does not list the band. Worse yet, the biography included on the ballot, giving a brief synopsis of Springsteen's career, does not even mention the E Street Band once. Denying the band well-deserved recognition would be bad enough; not even mentioning the E Street Band in a career-spanning biography of Bruce Springsteen is an inexplicable re-writing of history.

The Hall of Fame is about honor and history, but, like the business of rock 'n' roll itself, it has often been mired in politics,

greed, and scandal. The process of nomination has always been an extremely political process from the beginning, but it has only gotten more so. The lists of inductees have been criticized from numerous corners as favoring certain genres, races, styles, and regions. Granted, it's probably not possible to avoid criticism while still keeping the list of inductees small enough to make it special.

Early on, the Hall of Fame honchos were strict about

But when anyone thinks of the Rolling Stones these days, Wood is as much a part of their landscape as the lips logo. Keith Richards did the right thing in this instance by insisting that if "Ronnie doesn't go in, then I don't go in." Ronnie Wood was soon in the Hall of Fame, where he most certainly belonged.

Jerry Garcia did the same thing with the Grateful Dead when the initial ballot only included the best-known members. Garcia said he wasn't going

**It is no exaggeration to call the E Street Band one of the best bands of modern times, and for this reason alone they deserve recognition.**

inducting solo artists and leaving out their bands, and this caused major bad blood. Some of the early inductees included Buddy Holly without the Crickets, Bill Haley but no Comets, and Smokey Robinson but no Miracles. As the Hall of Fame has grown over the years, those rules have no longer been strictly followed. There are now numerous examples of artists who have been inducted along with their significant band: Frankie Lyman and the Teenagers, Booker T. and the MGs, Martha Reeves and the Vandellas, Gladys Knight and the Pips, and Sly and the Family Stone. It's hard to imagine any of those bands without the "and," but it's also hard to think of Bruce Springsteen's career without thinking of the E Street Band.

**W**hen the Rolling Stones were first contacted about their own pending induction, Ron Wood's name had been left off the nomination sheet. Wood had joined the Stones in the latter part of their career and was still with the Faces when the Stones could have been considered veterans.

in unless the Hall inducted all the members of the Dead over the years (including their songwriter, Robert Hunter). The Hall acquiesced, Garcia got his way, and band's full roster enjoyed the honor.

The fall-guy in the E Street Band controversy will be the Hall of Fame's archaic rules, which say that an artist can only be nominated 25 years after the first album is released, and nominated in the name that is on that release. And yes, *Greetings From Asbury Park* is credited as a Bruce Springsteen album. But the Hall has wavered from this rule before—and they should again. The Hall was formed to recognize talent, and their rules shouldn't be so restrictive and technical to ignore a talent as large as the E Street Band.

Why should the E Streeters be considered? There can be no denying that Springsteen's biggest albums were all recorded with the E Street Band, for one thing. But more importantly, an argument could easily be made that without the live show, Springsteen's career would have never achieved the heights that it did. Prior to forming the E Street

Band, Springsteen wasn't particularly well known. He broke as a national artist in 1975 because of the tremendous live performances, not because of the inherent power and beauty of his records. Bruce Springsteen without the E Street Band would have been no lesser of a talent, but it's doubtful that he would have reached such a mass audience and seen his music become so widely accepted. Remember that before 1980's "Hungry Heart," Bruce had never had a big radio hit—it was quite specifically the live shows between 1974 and 1980 that cemented Bruce Springsteen as an American icon.

This argument should be obvious to the readers of *Backstreets*, because this magazine has long been about the music of the Jersey Shore, and that includes Springsteen, the E Street Band, Southside Johnny, and the other great talents to come from that region. The Jersey Shore tradition has long emphasized bands over solo artists, and that is the milieu that Springsteen came from—he himself first gained distinction as a member of the band Steel Mill.

Could Springsteen have made as big an impact with a different set of players, with a different band other than the E Street Band? I would argue no. The E Street Band became an individual unit. Bruce was not just the singer, he was a member, and the leader, of the E Street Band. The E Street Band were not simply competent players, they were exceptional musicians, constantly topping critics' polls and consistently mentioned by other players as the tops in the game. It is no exaggeration to call them one of the best bands of modern times, and for this reason alone they deserve recognition.

Bruce himself has acknowledged the role of the E Street Band many times during his career, an acknowledgment that came every night onstage for 15 years. Springsteen insisted that

**Continued page 7**



The road to Cleveland begins

## Hall of Fame Nominates Springsteen

After attending the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame ceremonies like clockwork—performing in all-star jams or giving speeches to induct fellow artists—Bruce Springsteen himself will soon be given the honor of induction. Now that Springsteen has met the minimum requirement—25 years have passed since the release of his first LP, *Greetings from Asbury Park, NJ*—the official process has begun for his entry into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. As of September 15, when ballots were mailed to voters for the Hall's 14th annual election, Springsteen is an official Hall of Fame nominee.

The voters—more than 800 artists, producers, critics and others in the music industry—were given a ballot deadline of October 5. Once the votes have been tallied, the names of nominees

with more than 50 percent of the vote will go before an executive committee of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Foundation for final selection and approval. The 31-person committee is co-chaired by Springsteen manager Jon Landau and Sire Records president Seymour Stein. Once this process is complete, this year's Hall of Fame inductees will be announced in mid-November. The induction ceremony itself will take place in mid-March, 1999, at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York.

Though this is Bruce's first year of eligibility, it seems a given that he will be tapped to enter the hall in March.

Springsteen was nominated as a solo artist, and the ballot makes no mention of the E Street Band. His fellow nominees are Black Sabbath, Solomon Burke, The

Flamingos, Billy Joel, Darlene Love, Curtis Mayfield, Paul McCartney, the Moonglows, Gene Pitney, Del Shannon, Dusty Springfield, the Staple Singers, Steely Dan and Ritchie Valens.

For each nominee, the ballot includes a short artist bio and selected discography. His bio as it appears on the ballot: "Bruce Springsteen's arrival as a major rock figure began when *Time* and *Newsweek* ran simultaneous cover stories on him in 1975. His masterpiece album from that year, *Born to Run*, celebrated rock and roll romanticism and defined a search for personal identity and freedom. As a songwriter Springsteen fused influences from Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, Roy Orbison, and Hank Williams, while onstage he demonstrated the awesome emotional and physical power of rock and roll with legendary four hour marathon shows. By 1984, with *Born in the USA*, Springsteen had become the consummate American

rock artist. He continues today to make music that defines the American Experience."

Ballots were sent to voters along with a copy of a limited CD containing a song from each nominee, including Springsteen's "Born to Run." Ironically, the E Street Band, not up for induction, is actually represented twice on the CD: Darlene Love's track, "All Alone at Christmas," features E Street Band members and was produced by Little Steven.

—Christopher Phillips



BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

Bruce Springsteen's arrival as a major rock figure began when *Time* and *Newsweek* ran simultaneous cover stories on him in 1975. His masterpiece album from that year, *Born to Run*, celebrated rock and roll romanticism and defined a search for personal identity and freedom. As a songwriter Springsteen fused influences from Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, Roy Orbison and Hank Williams, while onstage he demonstrated the awesome emotional and physical power of rock and roll with legendary four hour marathon shows. By 1984, with *Born in the USA*, Springsteen had become the consummate American rock artist. He continues today to make music that defines the American Experience.

**Selected Discography:**  
*The Wild, The Innocent & The E Street Shuffle* (1974)  
*Born to Run* (1975) • *Darkness on the Edge of Town* (1978)  
*Nebraska* (1982) • *Born in the USA* (1984) • *Tunnel of Love* (1987)  
*Lucky Town* (1992) • *The Ghost of Tom Joad* (1995)

### Continued from page 6

the E Street Band name appear in posters and flyers in the same typeface and size as his own moniker. If you saw the marquee at any venue—from the Bottom Line to the Meadowlands—it always read "Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band." It was not a one-man show. Recently, years after going it alone in 1988, Springsteen told a journalist that, "Outside of my family, [the E Streeters are] the most important relationship in my life."

The relationship between Springsteen and the E Street Band was also unique within rock 'n' roll. This was not the same relationship that you'd see between singers and a casual back-up band, hired for a tour and then fired three months later. This was family. In the early years, it wasn't even a job for the E Streeters, since they didn't always get paid. "The band

showed him loyalty because he initially showed us loyalty," Garry W. Tallent once told me. "We had no experience in the studio whatsoever before that first record, and, at times, it showed. But he stuck by us anyway, and that's part of the reason we stuck by him during the lawsuit period, and during other times when we had no money, no work, no prospects and not much hope." Tallent's comments are echoed by interviews with other band members over the years. "We weren't mercenaries as some bands are," Mighty Max Weinberg told *CD Review* magazine. "We were together for almost spiritual reasons."

Whether or not the E Street

Band stands up that one night in March can't diminish their accomplishments, as long as fans remember their role, and as long as this magazine is around, their place in rock 'n' roll won't be forgotten. But history has a strange way of being rewritten over the years, just as the Hall of Fame bio rewrites Springsteen's history. The E Streeters are an important part of rock 'n' roll, and it would only be right for them to be recognized as such.

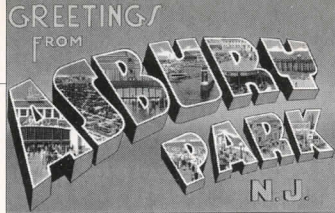
Including the E Streeters' names on that wall beneath Bruce's would not make his glory any less glorious and would not make his honor any less honorable. Rather than diminishing the

importance of Bruce Springsteen's contribution in any way, including the E Street Band in the induction would only help establish what Springsteen has long said from the stage: that he worked within a family, a group of misfits that came together to create a powerful and memorable sound. Springsteen himself can call the shots on this one. He can rise above the Hall's nominating committee and say that he won't take the podium unless his guys (and gals) are standing behind him. The mic will be all his, and the spotlight, as always, will be on Bruce. But Springsteen will be a better man standing in front of the band than he would be standing there alone.

"No one wins unless everyone wins," he said again and again from the stage over the years. He could have been talking about the Hall of Fame and a band that in its day had no rivals.







One more sweaty night

# The Stone Pony's Last Ride

By Robert Makin

**S**omebody ruined Asbury Park, Southside Johnny Lyon told the crowd while playing "The Fever" at the Stone Pony for possibly the last time.

"It wasn't you," he said. "It wasn't me. But it was somebody. And they're going to pay!"

Southside then took his anger out on a jam with Asbury Jukes guitarist Bobby Bandiera's band at the Pony's Last Ride, a party for the internationally renowned rock club held Sept. 18-20.

A week later, owner Steve Nasar would replace "The House That Bruce Built" with a dance club called Vinyl. Southside, who formed the Asbury Jukes at the Stone Pony in 1974 with Miami Steve Van Zandt, was not happy about the news.

"People from Korea come to Asbury Park to see the Stone Pony," said Southside, who grew up in the next town of Ocean Grove. "I was visiting my mother one time, and I happened to be walking past the Pony. These three Korean guys come up to me and say, 'Mister, mister....' And I'm like, 'Oh, geez.'" Southside had thought the tourists recognized him, but as it turns out: "They say, 'Mister, would you take our picture in front of the Stone Pony?' So I did."

The Pony closing came just weeks after it was announced that the Palace Amusements building would be scheduled for demolition. The Palace, made



*Whoa! A reunited Cats on a Smooth Surface end the Pony's Last Ride.*

world famous by a line in Springsteen's "Born to Run," still stands for now, and a movement among the fan community may save at least part of the landmark. But with the Casino empty, the majority of the boardwalk boarded up, the Palace threatened and the Pony soon to be gone, it seemed Madame Marie's fortune-telling shop would be the only landmark left from the decaying city's glory days.

Then some good news finally hit what has become Beirut-By-the-Beach: the Fast Lane would reopen the same weekend the Pony would close. While that's not where the R&B-driven sounds of Asbury Park originated, it did nurture the talent of one of the latter-day scene's favorite sons, Jon Bon Jovi.

In a way, the Pony turning into a dance club is not so unusual—the Stone Pony was a disco when it opened in 1974. The first rock band to play there was Vini

Lopez's initial post-E Street Band project, Cold, Blast & Steel, featuring fellow Upstage regulars John Luraschi on bass and Ricky DeSarno on guitar, and a newcomer named Steve Schraeger pounding the drums alongside the Mad Dog.

A reunion of Cold, Blast & Steel was among the many highlights of the Pony's Last Ride, which rocked throughout the weekend with nary a visit from Springsteen. But Southside was there, along with the Jukes' successors as the club's house band, Cats on a Smooth Surface. Cats replaced the Jukes in 1977, and three different incarnations of the band kept the gig until 1991, when original Pony owners Butch Pielka and Jack Roig were closed by a bankruptcy court.

Nasar bought and reopened the club in 1992, but drifted away from the aging Sounds of Asbury Park. He and promoter Tony Pallagrossi, a trumpet player in the early Asbury Jukes and the Shots, concentrated on alternative music—mainly hardcore during the club's final days. "That's why I felt I had to change the name, to disassociate with the hardcore scene," Nasar says.

Nasar spent \$30,000 renovating his club. The DJ booth along the south wall is now a stage, easily accessible for roadies from the parking lot that used to be Mrs. Jay's. Across the room, where the original stage was, is a raised bar with a clear sightline to the stage.


But Nasar doesn't plan on having live music that often. Vinyl mainly will present DJ-oriented house and techno music, interspersed with occasional swing bands and such Jersey Shore mainstays as John Eddie and La Bamba & the Hubcaps.

It's a shame there is no longer a regular audience for such local legends as The George Theiss Band, Paul Whistler & the Wheels and Lance Larson, all of whom reunited before a sweaty packed house at the Pony's Last Ride. Such younger but classic-sounding Pony bands as Outcry and Mike Dalton & the Push also participated.

Bob Santelli, this column's founder and now the director of education at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, flew in for the occasion. He received the club's stained-glass logo, which will be included in the museum's exhibit dedicated to Springsteen and the Sounds of Asbury Park. For Santelli, the scene's most notable historian and journalist, the Pony's Last Ride was bittersweet.

"I would rather have the Pony stay open in its original form than have this at the museum in the final chapter of what I would consider one of the greatest rock 'n' roll clubs in America," Santelli said over the phone a few days before the event. "I'm very sad to see it close."

The weekend's high point was "The Fever." A blast of energy shot through the muggy room as Southside and Bandiera ripped it up onstage, something they've been doing more than ever lately since the Jukes returned to the road earlier this year after a two-year touring hiatus. "Another sweaty night at the Stone Pony," Southside said from the stage. "There could be three feet of snow outside in the middle of February, and it would still be as hot as it is right now."

As I pumped my fist in the air, as I have for the past 17 years—half a lifetime—to live renderings of the soulful Springsteen tune, I realized: Southside and Bobby are always going to be great, no matter where they play. You can take away the Stone Pony, but you can't take that away from them, or me, or the hundreds of other sweat-drenched knuckleheads. 



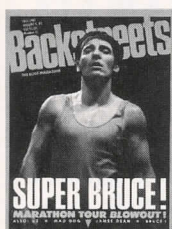
*Santelli (r.) accepts a piece of history for the Hall.*

MARK SULLIVAN PHOTOS

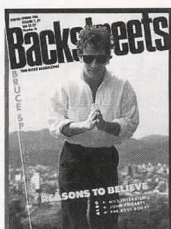


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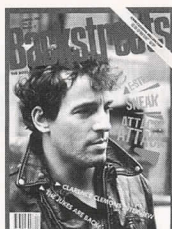
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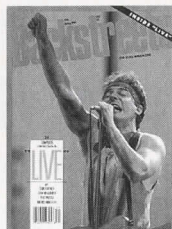
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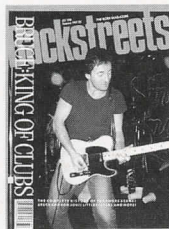
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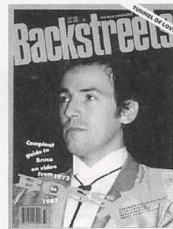
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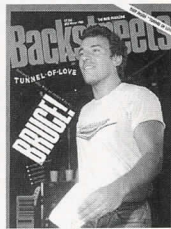
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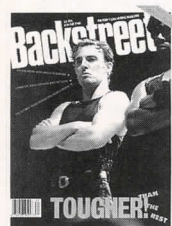
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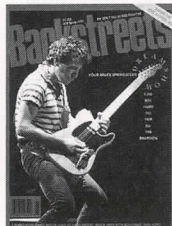
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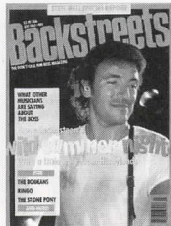
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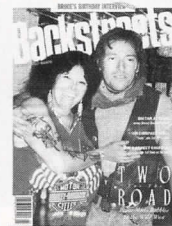
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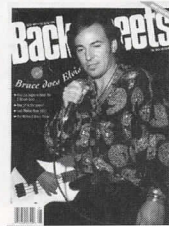
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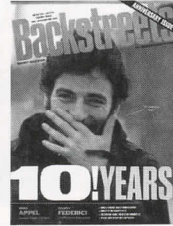
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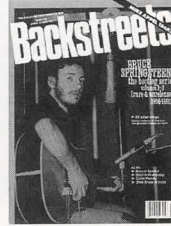
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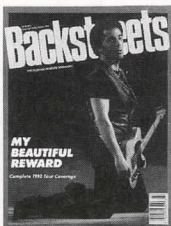
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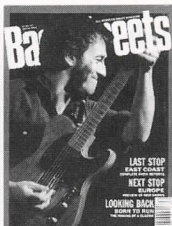
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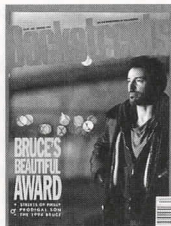
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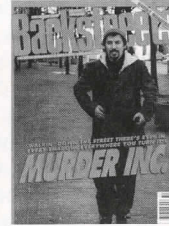
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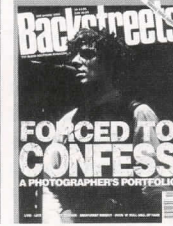
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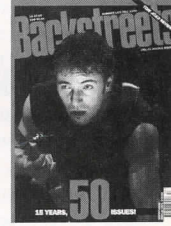
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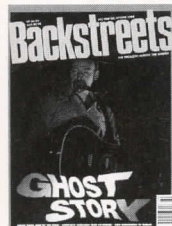
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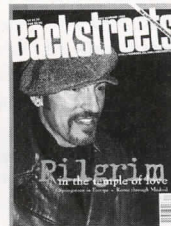
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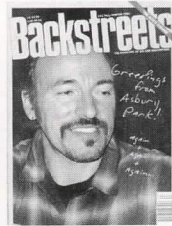
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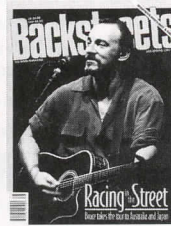
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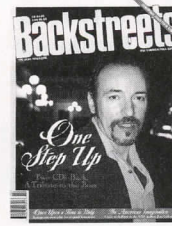
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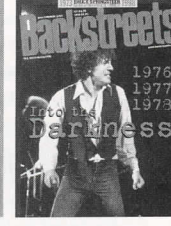
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If you wait 20 years, it will come

## A Fan's Dream Come True?

**T**welve years to the day after the release of the *Live* box set, Bruce Springsteen will release his second box, this time a four-CD collection of largely unreleased tracks. Though fans and record company executives have for years urged Springsteen to release some of his outtakes, Bruce only recently decided to open up the vaults for this unprecedented collection. As Springsteen himself writes in the liner notes to the set, "A lot of music, including some of my favorite things, remained unreleased."

Titled *Tracks*, the set will contain 66 songs stretching over the four CDs. The press release notes that 56 of them are "never before released masters." The remaining ten are previously released b-sides, and a good half of the 66 songs may be familiar to fans from live shows and bootleg recordings. Still, more than a dozen of the songs are titles that have never even been known to exist and have never been bootlegged. All the songs on the set will be digitally remixed and mastered, suggesting that the sound quality of some of the earlier recordings should surpass all previously heard versions. A source who had heard the material prior to its release called it

"remarkable; some of the best stuff Bruce ever did."

The set begins with four tracks from Springsteen's first Hammond demos in 1972, and the first CD covers material through 1977, ending with "Don't Look Back." The second and third discs concentrate on material from 1977 through 1987. And the final CD contains many never-heard-of titles from the last decade, ending with "Back in Your Arms" and "Brothers Under the Bridge."

Though the 66 tracks will no doubt keep fans entertained for some time, there is some grumbling about outtakes that aren't included. Obvious omissions include "The Promise," "Preacher's Daughter," "The Fever," "Because the Night," "County Fair," "From Small Things," "Cindy," and "The Big Payback"—the only b-side not to be on CD in any form whatsoever. There is still some hope that one or two of these tracks may end up as b-sides to singles from the box. Yet at a sales conference on September 28, manager Jon Landau explained that many of the tracks not selected were left off because Springsteen didn't consider them finished. Landau was specifically asked why "The Fever" was not on the set, and his

response indicated that Bruce did not consider that track to be a "finished master."

A three-song sampler CD, taken from the songs on *Tracks*, will be packaged with the first printing of *Songs*, the upcoming collection of Springsteen lyrics. The CD single will contain "I Wanna Be With You," "Lion's Den," and "Part Man, Part Monkey." A longer promotional sampler, as is common with multi-disc sets of this type, has also been discussed.

*Tracks* will be packaged in a 6" x 12" digipak-style box and include a 56-page booklet filled with photos and session information. Some of the session information will be as surprising to fans as the music itself, providing insights into previously unknown recording sessions. For example, "Lion's Den" is listed as recorded on January 25, 1982—a new possible session date for the E Street Band's legendary attempt at the electric version of *Nebraska*.

Though most of these recordings are historical, Springsteen reportedly did add some overdubs to certain tracks to flesh out things he thought incomplete. The *Tunnel of Love* horns were brought in for several numbers and reports in August and September had various members of

the E Street Band contributing to some tunes as well.

Though marketing material for this collection announces it as "Bruce Springsteen's *Tracks*," the box is very much a Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band release (the only official album where the E Streeters get title credit is the *Live* box). The promo material notes, "Tracks includes over four hours of music, much of this material recorded with the E Street Band." In discussing the sessions that yielded these tracks, Springsteen's own liner notes use the pronominal "we."

Rumors have been flying all fall that some dates with the E Street Band were being considered and penciled in as a way to help promote the set and bring attention to Springsteen. However with the current Rock and Roll Hall of Fame situation (see "On the Backstreets"), those concert plans are currently considered nothing but rumors.

*Tracks* lands in the U.S. on November 10, 1998. ➔

—Charles R. Cross

*Backstreets* will be printing reviews and readers' comments on *Tracks* in issue #61. Send your thoughts on the box to: *Backstreets*, PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115 USA. Fax to (206) 728-8827, or e-mail [iamtomjoad@aol.com](mailto:iamtomjoad@aol.com).

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Wages of Sin  
Take 'Em As They Come  
Be True  
Ricky Wants a Man of Her Own  
I Wanna Be With You  
Mary Lou  
Stolen Car  
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Johnny Bye Bye  
Shut Out the Light

### DISC 3

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My Love Will Not Let You Down  
This Hard Land  
Frankie  
TV Movie  
Stand on It  
Lion's Den  
Car Wash  
Rockaway the Days  
Brothers Under the Bridges ('83)  
Man at the Top  
Pink Cadillac  
Two for the Road  
Janey Don't You Lose Heart  
When You Need Me  
The Wish  
The Honeymooners  
Lucky Man

### DISC 4

Leavin' Train  
Seven Angels  
Gave It a Name  
Sad Eyes  
My Lover Man  
Over the Rise  
When the Lights Go Out  
Loose Change  
Trouble in Paradise  
Happy  
Part Man, Part Monkey  
Goin' Cali  
Back in Your Arms  
Brothers Under the Bridge

# TRACKS



## BIG BASEBALL PLAYER:

It seems Bruce Springsteen was one of many to catch baseball fever this summer—though not everyone is quite as welcome in the team clubhouse. At Yankee Stadium in August, Bruce paid a surprise visit to the New York side before the game. Guitar player (and Yankees center fielder) Bernie Williams got an autograph instead of giving one, as Bruce autographed his guitar: "Bernie, if you ever get tired of baseball...." Williams later said, "It was just great to get a chance to meet him. The guy's a legend. That got me really pumped up." Springsteen told Mike Vaccaro of the *Star-Ledger*, "I've always been a Yankee fan. In Freehold, all of my buddies were Yankees fans. We listened to them on the radio—when we weren't listening to Elvis or the Beatles." Just to keep things fair, the Boss also stopped by the visitor's clubhouse and chatted with the Twins' Paul Molitor, who presented Springsteen's son with a bat. "This is his first real baseball summer," Bruce also told Vaccaro. "That's all we've done this summer, play ball and talk ball and all of that. He played Little League this summer. His old man was the coach." . . . Less than a month later, as the home run race was in full swing, Springsteen and son were in St. Louis to see Mark McGwire and the Cardinals play the Cubs. They stopped by the clubhouse there as well, where Big Mac and the Boss had the chance to meet. After the game at a press conference, Cardinals manager Tony LaRussa said, "Never mind McGwire and Maris, something really important happened today. Bruce Springsteen was in our clubhouse."

## JUST WANNA SHOUT:

MOJO magazine recently polled 175 vocalists to come up with "The 100 Greatest Singers of All Time." Springsteen actually made the cut, coming in at #99. Even at the bottom the heap, placing in the top 100 is quite notable for Bruce, particularly since his songwriting is usually what gets the attention—and he beat out such artists as Emmylou Harris

and Johnny Cash, both of whom have interpreted his songs. MOJO notes Springsteen's "heart, soul, skill and scope" as a singer, and that, words aside, "he's come out with a score of the most hair-raising whoops, hollers and howls ever recorded." . . . The Badlees, a Northumberland, PA

band, have released a 5-song EP that includes a cover of "Atlantic City." For more information, go to [www.badlees.com](http://www.badlees.com) on the web or call (717) 374-2630. . . . Ex-Pixie Frank Black covers "I'm Goin' Down" on a recent single. . . . Travis Tritt has a version of "Tougher Than the Rest" on his new Warner Brothers album, *No More Looking Over My Shoulder*. . . . The last issue of *Backstreets* printed the lyrics to Dan Bern's "Talkin' Woody, Bob, Bruce and Dan Blues," but a recording has been unavailable commercially until recently. The song can now be found on a new self-released 2CD set from Bern called *Smartie Mine*. Available for \$17 postpaid from Dan Bern Headquarters, 1158 26th St. #441, Santa Monica, CA 90403. Check out Bern's website at [www.dbhq.com/smartiemine.html](http://www.dbhq.com/smartiemine.html) for more information or to order the set.

**TV MOVIE:** The John Ford-inspired *The Ghost of Tom Joad* may be making the transition back to film. HBO has been in discussions with Springsteen to bring his cinematic LP to the small screen. Reports have the proposed project as a series of films, each based on a song from the album. No names have yet been attached, but we're beginning to be able to picture Little Steven as a shoe salesman. . . . For now, HBO is giving Mr. Van Zandt his television acting debut in the upcoming series, *The Sopranos*, as the owner of the Bada Bing



"Backstreets Jukebox" alums Verbow take a break from recording their second LP.

Room, a hangout for Jersey mobsters. Look for the show's premiere in January. . . . If you're down in F-L-A, you may be able to catch the Big Man at his weekly gig. Clarence Clemons has been playing every Wednesday night at the 251 Sunrise club in West Palm Beach. . . . Max Weinberg turned up to play at a benefit in Long Branch for Gene Boccia, who lost his house in a fire. Also on hand to help out the former Jukes bassist were John Eddie, LaBamba & the Hubcaps, Glen Burtnick, and Bobby Bandiera among others. . . . Mary Cutrufello has been getting a lot of attention lately as a singer-songwriter in the Springsteen vein, including a cover story in *Interview* that wondered: "Rock's Next Boss?" Well, if nothing else, her touring band currently boasts one Danny Federici. Cutrufello, Federici and Co. have been touring in support of her debut album, *When the Night is Through*. When the tour hit Portland, ME, in September, Springsteen was also in town. Bruce decided to pay a visit, catch up with Danny and check out the show. Cutrufello told *Wall of Sound*, "We've been doing 'Darkness on the Edge of Town' in our set, and of course he walks right in as I'm getting ready to sing the last verse, 'Some folks are born into a good life....' And there he is standing in the doorway. It was really cool." Springsteen hung around after the show for a few hours to chat: "Everything you

hear about him being totally down-to-earth and a regular guy and everything is totally true," Cutrufello said. "He liked the band, liked what we were doing. It was great."

## WRITE THIS BOOK:

MetroBooks has just published *Springsteen* by Frank Moriarty, the first bio/photo book to follow Bruce's career into the Tom Joad era. . . . "To be a teenage middle class kid in the '70s in Cleveland was to be a Springsteen fanatic," says writer (and *Backstreets* reader) Greg Cielec, and his new book is evidence. *My Cleveland Story*, Cielec's first novel, uses a show on the *Born to Run* tour for a pivotal coming-of-age scene. Cielec told *Backstreets* that his description of the concert itself is "not historically accurate, but it is emotionally accurate. For example, the E Street Band did not start playing 'Paradise by the C' until several years later, but I needed that song to tie in with a moment later in the story." By taking matters into his own hands, Cielec also managed to obtain what some warned would be impossible: "I wrote a sincere and honest letter to Jon Landau asking permission to use lines from three songs. What a rush it was the day I came home from my teaching job and the waiver with the 'okay' was lying on the floor under my fax machine." Look for *My Cleveland Story* from Pink Flamingo Press.

—Christopher Phillips



Nils has the Right Stuff

## Lofgren Unplugs for *Acoustic Live*

By Sean McDevitt

As Nils Lofgren sits in a midtown Manhattan restaurant steadily salting his pasta between thoughts, he looks every bit the seen-it-all 30-year music veteran that he is. Dressed in blue jeans, lugging a stuffed backpack and a Takamine acoustic six-string, he's fresh off a train, in town this August day for a series of interviews and syndicated radio tapings in support of *Acoustic Live*, his latest solo release.

The 1997 concert recording, which features 17 tracks, finds the Chicago-born, Washington, D.C.-raised Lofgren on solid, familiar ground—the stage. Captured at the Barns of Wolftrap in Vienna, Virginia, *Acoustic Live* (The Right Stuff/Capitol) delivers Lofgren at his versatile best: singer, songwriter, pianist, and guitarist. Though he is currently without a record deal, that didn't stop him from making this new album a reality. He made the arrangements (financial and otherwise) to record the gig and had been selling tapes at shows before hooking up with The Right Stuff. In addition to six new tracks, the record provides updates on Lofgren staples like "Keith Don't Go" and "Sticks and Stones" and finds him playing some ambitious, inspired guitar on tunes like "Some Must Dream" and "Black Books."

Lofgren is no stranger to acoustic shows. He helped out on Neil Young's 1993 *Unplugged* album, in addition to having played many on his own. But the recent tour was a reminder that once the music's stripped down, there's no place to hide.

"At first we were terrified because we were so used to having a band," says 47-year-old Nils, who is joined on the record by brothers Tom, Michael and Mark, in addition to guitarist Paul Bell. "But once we got the hang of it, we were fine. It's something that we've done off and on for 15 years. It's a differ-



ent kind of focus—a deeper focus, really. You have the sense that you really have to stay in it a little deeper than when you're with a band."

Lofgren's musical journey to the present day reads like a slice of rock and roll fantasy. Like so many others, he started playing guitar as a teen and found inspiration in several Jimi Hendrix performances. After dropping out of high school, he ran away from home, trying to find a record deal in New York City. He caught his first big break from Neil Young, playing piano, guitar, and singing on Young's 1970 platinum classic, *After the Gold Rush*. It was a special chance to get a foot in the door.

"I was overwhelmed by the opportunity and experience to work with a young master like Neil Young," says Lofgren, who was just 18 years old at the time. "Fortunately, I'd had a year to get to know him as a friend, so thank God I wasn't so intimidated that I couldn't relax and play. I spent

day and night practicing at a keyboard, trying to figure out parts that felt good to me. At my most creative, the parts I played were very simple and basic, melodic and rhythmic. Very simple, and maybe that's why Neil wanted someone who wasn't that experienced on the piano. But he knew I was a good musician who loved his music."

Lofgren, who went on to record and tour with Young on two other occasions, earned acclaim for several early 1970s releases, both with his band Grin and as a solo artist. But after some not-so-well received efforts before the decade's end, his chances to blast into the commercial stratosphere had all but faded. His stock, however, always remained solid with those in the industry. Lofgren has put his considerable talents to work for the likes of Stephen Stills, Ringo Starr, Rod Stewart, Lou Gramm, Branford Marsalis, and, of course, Bruce Springsteen.

Lofgren, who contributed a rousing guitar solo to the title track on *Tunnel of Love* and also participated in the 1995 reunion that produced new recordings for *Greatest Hits*, first joined forces with the Boss and fellow E Streeters in 1984 for the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour. But his relationship with Springsteen dates back much earlier.

"I met Bruce in the early '70s, and we maintained a friendship," Lofgren remembers. "We didn't see each other a lot, but I always respected Bruce, and I was kind of out doing the same thing he was—being a solo artist, playing the same circuit. I'd go to see him whenever I could, especially in the studios in L.A. He was always very kind to me, and I was always a fan of his work."

And on the subject of Springsteen, Lofgren is asked the \$64,000 question: Any truth to the rumor that Bruce will tour with the E Street Band in 1999?

"I've been hearing that for 10 years," he says. "I've been in New York City, in a bar or some place,

and someone will say, 'Can't wait to see you next month in Central Park!' I'll say, 'Whaddaya mean?' And they'll say, 'Bruce is putting the band back together! You're playing in Central Park next month!' I just say, 'Really?'

"Obviously, I love the band and miss it," he adds. "But until Bruce calls and says that we're doing it, I don't pay attention to any of that. Until I hear from Bruce, I'm just going to treat it like all the other rumors. There are no plans that I know of for any shows, and until I hear otherwise, I just have to not pay attention to it."

Tour plans or no tour plans, for Lofgren, these truly are better days. He was married last spring, ("My third and final marriage," he says) to a Jersey girl named Amy, who he met many moons ago at a gig at the Stone Pony in Asbury Park.

"And I never saw her again for 18 years," Lofgren explains with a smile. "She was the one that got away. I didn't have her phone number, and I didn't know how to find her. Back then, I was in bars in Jersey twice a month, at least. I mean, I was constantly up and down the East Coast. I begged her to come on the tour bus to Boston, but she had a job. I thought, 'Oh well, I'll see her the next time I'm in Jersey.'"

Their paths crossed again not too long ago at a Scottsdale, Arizona gig, and this time, Lofgren made sure to get a telephone number. He says that his wife's understanding of his on-the-road lifestyle makes their relationship work. "I feel like I won the lottery," he says. "I feel like I've found my soul mate. And she really loves me because of who I am, and she knows that I wouldn't be who I am if I stopped performing. We miss each other and we wish we were together more, but it's not an option for me to stop performing. I think it would cripple me spiritually."

Sean McDevitt is assistant editor of *Guitar* magazine.



# BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

## 25 YEARS of RECORDED HISTORY

### 1979

#### January - March

The beginning of the year brings the end of the *Darkness* tour, with the final shows on December 31 and January 1 in Cleveland. Springsteen starts the new year with a bang—a thrown firecracker that explodes in his face. A none-too-pleased Bruce plays the rest of the show with a bandage below his eye. After resolving not to let it ruin his New Year, Springsteen and the E Street Band go on the next night to play three and a half hours, their longest show yet.

After the low profile of the “lawsuit years,” the now-completed tour has resolidified Springsteen’s reputation as an artist and performer; the January 9 issue of *Circus* writes: “If 1978 could be considered the Year of the Tour, then Bruce Springsteen’s return to the stage was one of the singular events of a musically exciting summer.” Year-end polls concur, as *Rolling Stone* critics pick Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band as Band of the Year: “Possibly rock’s most dramatic performer. Bruce’s die-cut dialogue with his excellent band turned their live performances into a tour de force.” *Rolling Stone* readers pick Bruce as Artist of the Year, Best Male Vocalist and Best Songwriter. On February 9, Bruce is featured in an ABC special called *Heroes of Rock ‘n’ Roll*, including the US debut of the “Rosalita” performance video.

After a post-tour break in California, Springsteen heads back to New Jersey to begin working on material for the next record: writing, working out arrangements

and taping demos at his Telegraph Hill home in Holmdel, NJ. Using just an acoustic guitar and portable tape recorder, Springsteen records spare rockabilly-flavored songs like “Chevrolet Deluxe” and early versions of “Held Up Without a Gun” and “You Can Look (But You Better Not Touch).” Moving into March, Springsteen is working on songs with titles like “Chain Lightning,” “Under the Gun” and “Man Who Got Away.” He also revisits “Janey Needs a Shooter,” a song he has kicked around for years; this year he will give it to Warren Zevon, who releases a rewritten “Jeannie Needs a Shooter.” Springsteen has already given “Fire” to rockabilly artist Robert Gordon, introduced to him by Garry Tallent, and on March 14 Bruce plays the song with Gordon onstage at the Fast Lane in Asbury Park.

By now Bruce has enough songs written to begin rehearsing with the band. He reconvenes the E Streeters to rehearse at the Telegraph Hill house in anticipation of studio sessions; they spend the remainder of the month working out the new songs in Bruce’s living room. On the other side of the pond, England’s only taste of Springsteen’s live performance since 1975 comes when the “Rosalita” video airs on BBC-TV’s *The Old Grey Whistle Test* on March 27.

The following morning, March 28 at around 4 am, two pumps of Unit 2 of the Three Mile Island nuclear plant in Pennsylvania shut down, and the core rapidly overheats. Roughly 500,000 people in the small surrounding towns are in a state of panic. On March 30—as Bruce and the band rehearse in not-so-far-away Holmdel—Pennsylvania’s governor advises “those who may be particularly susceptible to the effects of radiation... to leave the area within a five-mile radius of the Three Mile Island facility until further notice.”

## PART THREE: 1979-1983



## April

When not recording, Bruce is spending time at the Fast Lane in Asbury Park. On April 13 and 15 he plays with Beaver Brown, but more often than not he's just hanging out. Northwest NJ's *Daily Record* reports that Bruce has "made the club his second home when he's not away

**October 4, 1979: Two reels with ten sequenced tracks for *The Ties That Bind*.**

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In mid-April, Springsteen loses control of a three-wheeler, crashing into a tree and, it turns out, damaging a leg muscle. Recording must be put on hold when Bruce finally makes it to a hospital that night and a doctor tells him to stay off his leg for three weeks.

## May - August

On June 3 in Los Angeles, Springsteen and members of the E Street Band help entertain at the Whiskey for the wedding reception of lighting designer Marc Brickman. While in L.A., Bruce meets with anti-nuke

Recording continues for the rest of the summer, five days a week, starting in the early evening and lasting until dawn. Max Weinberg later tells Craig Rosen, "I saw the sun come up almost every day." By several accounts, it is during these sessions when the E Street Band really begins recording live. Van Zandt recalls: "We used extensive room mics on that album for the first time to capture the sound of the band live." Weinberg says, "It was the first record where we really started to play as a band, all live in the studio, all of us playing simultaneously." Songs recorded this summer include "Hungry Heart," "The Price You Pay," "Stolen Car," "Cindy," and "I Wanna Marry You."

## September - December

Mid-September was originally CBS's projected release date for the new album, but with that clearly out of the question by now, the label plans for an album by Christmas. Though recording does not let up, Springsteen and the band sign on to play the final two nights of MUSE's five-night "No Nukes" concerts at Madison Square Garden. Ernest Leogrande writes in the *Daily News*: "The musical rally could have been for the no-bananas cause and, with Springsteen featured, it still would have created a monumental ticket scramble." At these shows, themselves a reaction to Three Mile Island, Bruce is the only artist not to make political statements, and strangely, he does not play "Roulette." Instead, Springsteen debuts "The River" on September 22. Two songs from that show will be released on the *No Nukes* album, while three songs from the September 23 show will be used in the *No*

September 23, Springsteen's 30th birthday, is also the official publication date of Dave Marsh's *Born to Run: The Bruce Springsteen Story*, with an initial printing of 15,000. Work in the studio continues with barely a pause for the two concerts, and within a few days a record has taken shape. Ten tracks are selected, mixed, sequenced, and, on October 4, taped onto two reels labeled as side one and side two. Frank Stefanko, the photographer from *Darkness*, has another photo session with Bruce, and cover mock ups are created for an album called *The Ties That Bind*. For a brief time, it looks like the label may be getting the album they wanted by Christmas.

On **October 5** and **6**, perhaps in a celebratory mood, Bruce once again joins Beaver Brown for two nights at the Fast Lane. Any celebrations don't



**With Robert Gordon  
in Asbury Park, 5/27/79**



last long, as Springsteen soon decides to scrap the new record and go back to recording again. The album was indeed ready, as he later tells Robert Hilburn, but Springsteen "didn't put it out because it wasn't personal enough." The material itself, however, suggests the opposite, and many years later when these reels are discovered and a bootlegged version of *The Ties That Bind* surfaces, the bootleg's liner notes describe the album as "a multi-faceted examination of love and relationships. Was it a little too close to the heart?"

Work continues on the fifth record, with Bruce once again writing new material and rehearsing the band at his Telegraph Hill home in Holmdel, NJ. In late October, Bruce takes a few days to mix "Stay" for the *No Nukes* album, as he had agreed to give one song to the concert record. When it is decided to make the album a three-record set, the "Detroit Medley" is settled upon as an extra track and edited to make it fit. The *No Nukes* set is released by Asylum in December, including Springsteen's first officially released live material: "Stay" and, as it is called here, the "Devil with the Blue Dress Medley."

# 1980

## January - March

While Bruce himself keeps a low profile in the first months of the '80s, he is still in the public eye thanks to the *No Nukes* record and Marsh's book. In January, *Born to Run* makes the best seller list. *The New York Times Book Review* writes: "Only once before, when Elvis Pres-



ley's death occasioned several instant memoirs, has any book about rock achieved best-sellerdom." Work on the record alternates between rehearsing in Holmdel and recording at the Power Station, with songs like "Two Hearts," "Restless Nights" and "Held Up Without a Gun" in the works. As the sessions drag on, Van Zandt concentrates on production of the record, but the other band members moonlight with other artists, such as Jim Steinman, Ian Hunter, David Bowie, Garland Jeffreys, and Graham Parker. Before his own record comes out, Bruce himself contributes backup vocals to Parker's "Endless Night" on *The Up Escalator*. Producer Jimmy Iovine suggested Bruce, of whom Parker tells *Melody Maker*, "A regular bloke, he ain't impressed with anything, just making records... He's a real worker, he would've taken eight months to do it."

March 1 marks Bruce's only known performance for the year between October of '79 and October of '80, when he jams with the David Johansen Band at the Fast Lane. On March 23, an AP story reports of petitions to make "Born to Run" the official state song of New Jersey; an original proponent of the idea, disc

jockey Carol Miller, has spoken with Bruce: "He laughed, but he seemed very pleased about it."

## April - September

After more than a year in the studio, *The Face* reports that "there is still no definite release date. Producer Jon Landau, musical director Miami Steve Van Zandt and engineer Jimmy Iovine are said to be booking time in three-month blocks and hiring orchestras at vast expense as Springsteen investigates differing approaches to songs. Studio bills are reckoned to have passed the \$300,000 mark. The Clash, who began some recording at The Power Station at the end of their US tour, were forced to move across town to Electric Ladyland when they ran up against one of Bruce's block bookings." *The Face* also reports that at least 60 tracks have been completed, and that Bruce "junked miles of tape after hearing Tom Petty's Jimmy Iovine-produced smash *Damn the Torpedoes*."

By early May, Springsteen has 25 songs to begin mixing, and he flies to L.A. with Landau and Van Zandt to begin the process at Clover Studio with Chuck Plotkin. Figuring out which of the songs to lose proves to be the real stumbling block until the idea of a double album solves the problem. This is a huge breakthrough for several reasons: most of the songs can now be included (with the few leftovers as potential b-sides), and Springsteen is able to tell a story that is more complex.

The New Jersey State Legislature adopts "Born to Run" as "Unofficial Youth Rock Anthem" on June 12. Bruce meets Gary US Bonds for the first time this summer—though Bruce has performing "Quarter to Three" for years. Bonds has no idea who Springsteen is.

The *No Nukes* movie premieres on July 18 and is in wide release by August. This documentary of the MUSE concerts features 20 minutes of Bruce footage, including "The River," "Thunder Road," and "Quar-

# No Nukes

I'm sure the second MUSE show at Madison Square Garden in late September of '79 was exactly like the first one I saw—it was a Bruce concert, except with a few opening acts. Everyone was there to see Bruce and the E Street Band (and let the politics be damned). The massed cry of his name drowned out practically every performer who had the unenviable job of appearing before him, with the level of the din raised or lowered in accordance with each performer's perceived rock 'n' roll street cred: lower for Jesse Colin Young and his classic rock hit "Get Together"; louder—much louder—for Chaka Khan, who, decked out in a glittery, sequinned red pants suit, was "Broooooed" right off the stage, exiting in a huff visible from the upper decks.

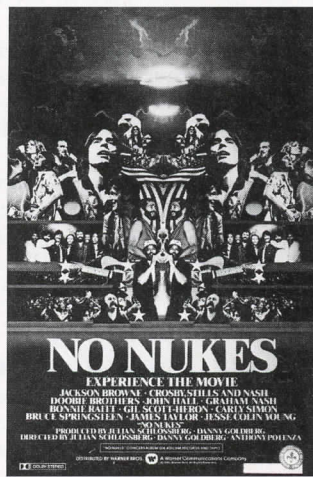
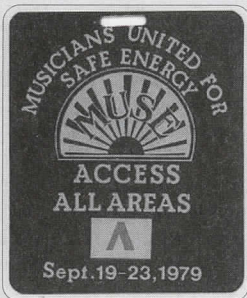
When Bruce finally showed, the opening chords of "Prove It All Night" proved strangely disappointing. After all, this was Bruce's first major show after the glorious *Darkness* tour, and the extended guitar intro to "Prove It" was one of that tour's highlights; to hear it truncated smacked of compromise. Granted, it was unavoidable, given that Bruce had to perform an abbreviated (for him) set (approximately an hour and a half). Nevertheless, it put a damper on the show

that I couldn't quite shake off.

Bruce's debut of "The River" was, in retrospect, disappointing as well, but for different reasons. I'm sure I was in the minority of those who found this song, like so many of Bruce's post-*Born to Run*-era ballads, lyrically fascinating but musically plodding; knowing what we know now about "Roulette" compounds it. Had Bruce performed "Roulette" at MUSE, the audience would have been absolutely leveled by its power—which, in light of Bruce's lack of a written position on the nuclear issue in the MUSE program book, would have perfectly lived up to his declaration to let the music be his message. His decision to play "The River" instead symbolizes the fork in the road of Bruce's career, away from the full-throttle guitar-based rock 'n' roller witnessed on the *Darkness* tour, and towards being what *Time Magazine* called him in 1984, "the blue-collar troubador of the working class."

The rest of the concert was more satisfying, with the Jackson Browne-led jam on "Stay" and the ever-popular "Detroit Medley" standing out in memory. The footage of the latter, seen in the *No Nukes* movie, was actually taken from the infamous second night, coincidentally Bruce's thirtieth birthday—the night Bruce angrily pulled photographer Lynn Goldsmith up out of the crowd and onto the stage (yelling, "This is my ex-girlfriend!"), and then, later on, dumping an oversized birthday cake back onto the fans who presented it to him! These incidents have always ranked as the most inexplicably jarring bits of behavior by Bruce in concert—at least until he began preaching the joys of cunnilingus on the *Tom Joad* tour!

—Arlen Schumer





# The Top Ten River Outtakes

BY ARLEN SCHUMER

**F**ollowing the triumphant *Darkness on the Edge of Town* tour of 1978, Bruce Springsteen's fifth album was, to this listener, a major disappointment, falling victim to that which plagues most double albums: padding with inferior material. Songs like "Fade Away" and "Crush on You" are among the worst material Bruce has committed to vinyl. *The River* is only further diminished by the uniform greatness of *The River* outtakes, an overwhelming collection of incredible songs that is measured in converse proportion to the quality of the material officially released. Practically every one of the ten outtakes selected here is better, musically and lyrically, than anything found on the double album; some are among the best songs he has ever written, sung, and performed with the E Street Band, leaving dedicated Springsteen listeners shaking their heads in disbelief that he could leave them off the album—especially in lieu of what he put on instead.

## 1. ROULETTE

Though it was written and recorded after the Three Mile Island crisis in the spring of '79, Bruce's belated (and perplexing) release and performance of "Roulette" during the 1988 *Tunnel of Love* tour technically disqualifies it as an unreleased track. But for all those years in between it was considered to be Bruce's greatest lost outtake. Beginning with an ominous-sounding drum salvo that recalls, of all things, Buddy Holly's "Peggy Sue," Bruce then assaults the listener with a sinewy electric guitar line slithering around a startling vocal delivery that ratchets up to a breathless scream of rage spit out, unabated, until the end of the song. The relentless beat of Roy's piano, Garry's bass and Max's drums keeps pace throughout. As in his best compositions, Bruce's lyrics paint pictures that forever make videos irrelevant: "We left the toys out in the yard" sets the scene of an emergency evacuation ever so succinctly. "Roulette" was Bruce's first real "topical" song, and, had it been released in '79 even as a stand-alone single, would have arguably been the best political track since "Ohio" by Crosby Stills Nash & Young followed the Kent State shootings in 1970.

## 2. RESTLESS NIGHTS

The Bruce Springsteen and E Street Band heard during the *Darkness* tour is the band one hears in "Roulette" and the rest of the *River* outtakes: an incredibly tight rock 'n' roll band playing at the peak of its potential, with Bruce playing ferocious lead guitar (on the entire double-album length of *The River* there is not a single electric guitar solo) and singing like his life depended on it. That's a pretty good description of "Restless Nights," one of the most haunting and enigmatic songs Bruce has written, and at the same time one of his and the band's wildest rock 'n' roll workouts. Between its startling high-hat cymbal opening and the organ glissando that winds down the ending is an intense E Street Band jam, featuring a tremendous organ solo by Danny and some of Bruce's best unrestrained guitar playing and vocal howling. The lyrics are hard to decipher, but the lines that can be made out are evocative, wistful and dramatic: "The childhood games we played have faded away... lost in wide-awake dreams...." Like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, you piece together these lines as you listen to form the larger picture of lost youth and lost love, but it escapes you in the end—and you don't care, for you're lost in a most beautiful cacophony of raging rock and roll. "Restless Nights" just could be Bruce's greatest single outtake...

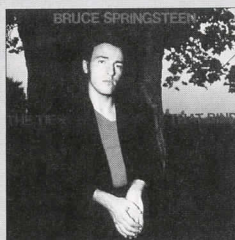
## 3. TAKE 'EM AS THEY COME

...but it would have to give this and the next three songs a run for their money. All five songs break full-borne out of the starting gate, eschewing the slower, instrumental lead-ins buildups Bruce has always

avored. "Take 'Em As They Come" is almost a mirror image to "Restless Nights," with similar lyrical magic, single lines that tell entire stories: "God save the rider in the black night... Winners and losers all look the same from the other side...." And it is the most overt homage to the jangling guitars of the Byrds (a sound Bruce was obviously investigating, along with the Searchers and the British Invasion, throughout the *River* recording sessions), particularly "I'll Feel a Whole Lot Better." Most of Bruce's homages and cover songs go to the core of what made the original great and come out the other side, sometimes even more real and true to the spirit of the original than the original itself, if that's possible—compare Bruce's cover of "I Want You" to Dylan's version. "Take 'Em" is no exception, with great vocal harmonies, machine-gun drumming by Max, and a lovely, surprising instrumental coda driven by Garry's bass that brings this song to a satisfying fade out.

## 4. LOOSE ENDS

A clarion call of chiming guitars and booming drums heralds the magnificent "Loose Ends" and sounds, like so many of Bruce's songs, at once both fresh and classic. It's reminiscent of something from the great rock 'n' roll jukebox of history that has lain dormant (perhaps the Raspberries' "I Want to Be With You"? ) until Bruce exhumed it and injected it with new life. From the deck-clearing opening comes this mid-tempo rocker, featuring another in a long line of note-perfect sax solos by Clarence. Lyrically, it's one of Bruce's darkest romantic meditations, the title itself a hyper-dramatic metaphor for the disintegration of love. As such, "Loose Ends" is the perfect bookend album-closer to the opening title track as sequenced on the 1979 almost-released album *The Ties That Bind*.



LP cover mock-ups considered for the album—that-almost-was, 1979's *The Ties That Bind*.



## 5. WHERE THE BANDS ARE

This song cuts to the heart of what makes Bruce tick, what we have always loved about him and the E Street Band: the sheer joy and enthusiasm of playing and listening to the music that moves us, the music that makes us feel glad to be alive: rock 'n' roll. "Where the Bands Are" harkens back to the wild abandon of the 1973 outtake "Seaside Bar Song" while foreshadowing *Born in the USA*'s "No Surrender" (and sharing a lyric line or two with *The River*'s "Jackson Cage"). From its breakout opening to the concluding, soaring vocal harmonies—multi-tracked by Bruce alone, sounding more *pop* than he ever has—"Where the Bands Are" is one of the most truly thrilling songs Bruce has ever written, sung, and recorded. Like "Born to Run," it sounds like a theme song for rock 'n' roll itself; it contains a little bit of the spirit of every great song you've ever loved.

## 6. MARY LOU

Speculation has it that the lyrics to what eventually became "Be True," the second b-side from *The River*, were an admonition to aspiring actress Joyce Heiser, Bruce's girlfriend at the time, not to fall for—and be heartbroken by—the typical Hollywood actor. But the road to that song wound its way through a number of outtakes, including "White Lies" A.K.A. "Little Girl's Dream" A.K.A. "Don't Do It to Me" (a cross between the Stones' "Paint it Black" and the 1967 single "Friday on My Mind" by the Australian band the Easybeats), and "Mary Lou." Of the three, "Mary Lou" is by far the greatest, a flat-out fantastic rock 'n' roll song, full of power and passionate vocals. Bruce sang this one at full tilt, just ahead of the beat—a refreshingly uncommon beat for Bruce and the band. Max's drums are at their best here as well, peppered by deep bass-drum fills, tommy-gun paradiddles, and a concluding barrage that sounds like the finale of "Please Please Me" on steroids.



## 7. STOLEN CAR (ALTERNATE VERSION)

"Stolen Car" exists in two completely different, beautiful versions—it's up to the discerning listener to decide which is better. The outtake (A.K.A. "Son You May Kiss the Bride") has a more traditional, acoustic arrangement that most fans find far more fulfilling than the released version's echoey, somber sound. I'm of split mind on this one, as I do find the latter's stately, precise piano and distant background vocals to be quite ethereal (and used effectively in the 1997 film *Copland*). The penultimate verse in the outtake—the surreal dream vision—gives background to the lyric story and provides an extra dimension only hinted at in the released track; it would later be resurrected for *Born in the USA*'s "Downbound Train."

## 8. YOU CAN LOOK (BUT YOU BETTER NOT TOUCH) (ALTERNATE)

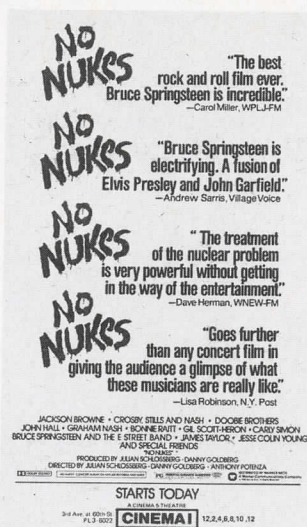
Upon hearing *The River* for the first time, I recall commenting that "You Can Look" sounded like a hybrid I dubbed "country & western rock & roll," meaning faster and tougher than "country rock," as popularized by the early '70s Byrds and Eagles. Little did we know then that this earlier recorded version of the song, had Bruce released it instead, would have given a boost to the rockabilly revival started a few years prior by Robert Gordon and Dave Edmunds; it would have scooped the Stray Cats by two years! Once again, Bruce tosses away a song—in this case a version of a song—lesser artists would build albums around. It's telling that Bruce returned to this styling of "You Can Look" years later during the *Tunnel of Love* tour.

## 9. CINDY

The Buddy Holly influence on Bruce, so prevalent during the *Darkness* tour, finds expression in this song, recalling Holly's "Words of Love." Magnified by his own double-tracked vocal harmonies, Bruce has never sounded sweeter than he does here, singing of an unrequited love, and the song's production highlights every instrument with crystal clarity. Momentarily slated for release on *The Ties That Bind*, "Cindy" bears some relation, thematically, to its released doppelganger, "Fade Away"; any comparisons end there, with the latter sounding like Bruce doing a bad Elvis Costello impression.

## 10. THE TIES THAT BIND (ALTERNATE)

I include this outtake version of the song, found on the aforementioned bootlegged album of the same name, primarily for discussion purposes. It's somewhat of an arbitrary selection—other standout *River* outtakes, like the version of "The Price You Pay" with the extra verse or the alternate "Point Blank," could be chosen for much the same reason. They are all indicative of the main problem with *The River* itself: great songs were overworked in the recording process, something of their essential life sapped, and then released. This practice continued during the *Born in the USA* era (the earlier recording of "Janey Don't You Lose Heart" versus the released b-side) up through *Human Touch* (the outtake of "I Wish I Were Blind" with the extended Bobby Hatfield vocal). But *The River* sustained the heaviest losses. One only has to listen to both released and unreleased versions of "The Ties That Bind" to hear how superior the latter is. The vocal richer and less tinny, the guitars more up front in the mix, giving it its greater power. Listen to the penultimate versions of "Cadillac Ranch" and "Ramrod," compared to their final takes, for a similar musical letdown. Add to this list the "Be True," "Stolen Car," "You Can Look," and "Point Blank" outtakes; consider songs like "I'm a Rocker" or "Out in the Street" pale stand-ins for "Where the Bands Are"; observe that "Two Hearts" and "Jackson Cage" are basically all that remain of Bruce's experimentation with a British Invasion-meets-the Byrds sound—and you have the complete story of *The River*'s great divide. Such a gap in quality between the released and unreleased *River* songs exists, I believe, because of Bruce's major shortcoming as an artist: his inability to judge his best material, or to leave some of that material well enough alone. It is akin to a visual artist who creates a beautiful sketch, only to overwork it as it is brought to finish—resulting in a slick, polished product that has lost, forever, the gestural life it once had.



ter to Three." Bruce Rosen reviews the film: "A MUSE spokesman said many artists insisted that there be no cuts to the audience during their performances. Such cuts, while perhaps artistically compromising, can provide a measure of relief from long close-ups. The *No Nukes* concert footage is almost like a continual close-up, and the results range from the dynamic to the tedious. The contrast is most evident in the case of Springsteen, who allowed a new song, 'The River,' to open his film set. Springsteen is shown in extreme close-up, blinking uncontrollably from sweat, his mouth and nose obscured by microphone and harmonica. Finally, he closes his eyes completely. On the next song, 'Thunder Road,' the shot widens, to tremendous dramatic effect. The wide shot is even more effective on 'Quarter to Three' and on a minute or so of hambone antics which are sure to win Springsteen an even larger audience. These scenes are tremendous, far more effective than his live performance, at least on the first night..."

Soon after the film is released, a live tape of "The River" makes its way to radio; Landau obtains cease and desist orders. When other unfinished tracks from the *River* sessions begin getting airplay as well, a Columbia spokesman beseeches radio to play only released material.

"Point Blank" is the final song completed for the album, finished during the last days of recording. As the album nears completion, there are the usual last-minute changes and hold-ups. Progress on the record stalls for two weeks when trying to gain permission to use the image of the Cadillac Ranch, already part of the packaging design. "Be True" is

dropped from inclusion. "Held Up Without a Gun," which is on the first master, is withdrawn so late in the game that some packaging materials have to be reprinted. By September, a year and a half after work began, *The River* is essentially finished. The September 11 *New York Post* reports that the album will finally be out at the end of the month. Rehearsals for the tour begin in a barn in Lititz, Pennsylvania. At the end of the month, though the record has yet to be released, fans set up tents four days early and camp out for tickets for the first show. 14,000 tickets sell out in a matter of hours.

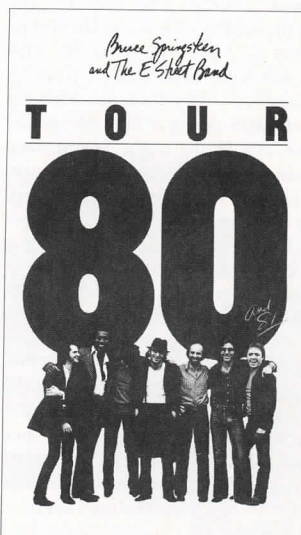
## October

The year-long *River* tour of marathon concerts begins two weeks prior to the album's release, with Springsteen and the E Street Band making the move into sports arenas. Recalling the pared-down MUSE performances, Van Zandt later tells Dave Marsh, "After those shows went over so great, I just figured that's what we'd be doing on this tour. Just 90 minutes, a couple of ballads, and make people as crazy as you can, like the old days. We can do that. But not

Bruce. What we ended up doing was just adding that 90 minutes to the show we always did." Marc Brickman is back as lighting designer, this time with a computer-

controlled design. He tells Dave Marsh, "if you can figure out a way to program Bruce's show, you can figure a way to make it work for anything."

After nearly two years off the road, Springsteen and the E Street Band return to the stage on October 3 at the Crisler Arena in Ann Arbor, MI. For the first time, Springsteen uses "Born to Run" as an opener. As Lou O'Neill Jr. later writes in the *Aquari-*







an, "That alone should give you a pretty good perspective about Springsteen's self-confidence these days. Not many artists open a performance with one of their biggest hits." Except at this first show he forgets the words. As he tells Dave DiMartino, "I'd just listened to ['Born to Run'] in the dressing room like ten times.... and I went up to the mic and I couldn't remember the words... 'Oh shit. I don't know these words.' And I thought, 'Not only do I not know these words, I don't know any of the others.' This was all taking place within about five seconds. 'What the hell am I gonna do?' I mean, you can't stop. And then out in the audience I hear, 'In the day we sweat it...' and it was great. And then it was fine. That was an amazing audience." The audience includes Bob Seger, sitting in the 13th row. By the end of the night Springsteen brings Seger onstage to perform "Thunder Road" for the second time in the same show.

For the second night, October 4 in Cincinnati, 16,300 tickets sell out in under three hours—especially significant as it is the Riverfront Coliseum's first sellout since the Who concert tragedy on December 3, 1979. Promoter Cal Levy tells *Rolling Stone*, "For the first time since December 3, people didn't have to look over their shoulders to enjoy themselves." Cincinnati Mayor (and talk show host-to-be) Jerry Springer declares, "Rock 'n' roll should never be a

defendant in the Who case. Bruce Springsteen showed us that, and we should be grateful to him." These sellouts aren't just isolated incidents—as the tour continues, the band sells out multiple nights in cities across the country, even where they didn't sell out even one night just two years before.

After the October 14 Milwaukee show, Bruce is starting to pick up on this as he tells Fred Schruers of *Rolling Stone*, "It was a real warm crowd. A lot of them have seen us before. I don't think they come to the show at this point with an attitude of 'You have to win me over.' Course, a lot of people bring friends who have never seen us. They must, 'cause a lot of these places we didn't sell out before. So they must be bringing somebody from some place."

On October 17, *The River* is released in the US, produced by Landau, Springsteen, and Van Zandt. The album lists at \$15.98, but many stores sell it for less than ten dollars. The popularity of *The River* boosts catalog sales, with *Greetings and Wild & Innocent* soon joining the new album in platinum status. The album is viewed by some as the third of a trilogy, as what happens next to the characters from *Born to Run* and *Darkness*. Years later Bruce will note, "Darkness was about a guy stripping himself down, trying to find out where he stands. *The River* is about trying to get connected back with your relationships. That was the first

record where people were married."

But the overwhelming motif captured by the two-record sprawl—aside from the constant recurrence of cars and girls—is Bruce's grappling with contrast and paradox. Springsteen tells Hilburn: "Rock 'n' roll has always been this joy, this certain happiness that is in its way the most beautiful thing in life. But rock is also about hardness and coldness and being alone. With *Darkness* it was hard for me to make those things coexist. How could a happy song like 'Sherry Darling' coexist with 'Point Blank' or 'Darkness on the Edge of Town'? I couldn't face that. I wasn't ready for some reason within myself to feel those things. It was too confusing, too paradoxical. But I finally

got to the place where I realized life had paradoxes, a lot of them, and you've got to learn to live with them."

Some glowing reviews focus on this everything-at-once presentation of the album, as J.D. Considine writes in the *News-American*: "The triumph of *The River* is that Springsteen has finally captured the totality of rock 'n' roll: its mindless release, its heartbreak, its mythic intensity, its emotional power and its sense of humor...."

Not everyone feels that emotional power or appreciates the way the tracks on the album work together as a whole, and reviews are decidedly mixed. Ira Robbins writes in *Trouser Press*: "Unable or unwilling to cast off the clichés of his past records, *The River's* attempt to Make a Statement is buried in an avalanche of repetition and evident lack of inspiration.... *The River* adds up to a water-treading exercise that neither upholds his standards of excellence nor explores any new avenues." Robbins also points out: "Out of 20 tracks, 13 use 'night'; nine use 'street' and there are four with 'highway' and two with 'avenue'; 'drive' turns up in ten songs, as does 'heart.'"

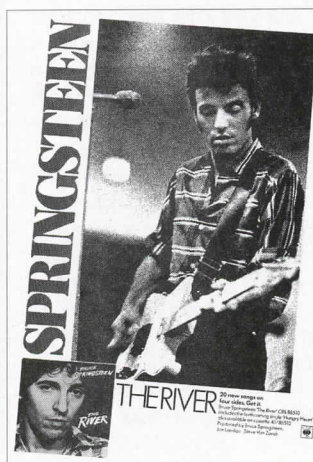
On October 18, *The River's* first single, "Hungry Heart" b/w "Held Up Without a Gun," is released in US, and the a-side debuts the same night in St. Louis. The band works their way to the West Coast, with stops in St. Louis and Denver. On October 24, 10,000 copies of the first issue of *Backstreets* are handed out before the Seattle show.

In Oakland, at the height of presidential campaign, on October 27, Bruce introduces Clarence as "the Next President of the United States!"

At the end of the month, Bruce and the band play four sold out shows at the Los Angeles Sports Arena. After problems with tickets for these shows, Bruce begins to fight scalping whenever possible and, at every night of this stand, tells the crowd how to help. On the lighter side, he also emerges from a coffin on October 31 to begin the show with "Haunted House."

## November

On November 1, *The River* enters the *Billboard* chart at #4. The band has November 4 off, and on this night Ronald Reagan is elected President of the United States. According to Mikal Gilmore, Springsteen stays up late, "watching the election returns, and stayed in his hotel room the whole [next] day, brooding over whether he should make a comment on the turn of events." On the night of November 5, toward the end of the first set in Tempe, AZ, he does: "I don't know what you guys think about what happened last night, but I think it's pretty frightening. You





guys are young, there's gonna be a lot of people depending on you comin' up, so this is for you." The band tears into "Badlands," the version later included on the *Live* box. This same night, Bruce is given a copy of Joe Klein's *Woody Guthrie: A Life*—which will be mentioned repeatedly on this tour and will dramatically affect the course of his career. After Springsteen's comments on the election, Greil Marcus writes these extremely prescient words in *New West*: "...it is almost a certain bet that the songs Springsteen will now be writing will have something to do with the events of November 4. These songs likely will not comment on those events; they will, I think, reflect those events back to us, fixing moods and telling stories that are, at present, out of reach."

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WEEKS ON CHART	Artist-TITLE-Label
★	1	5	<b>BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN</b> The River, Columbia PC 2-36854

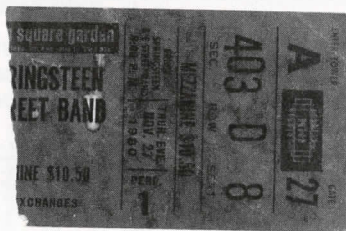
On November 8, Springsteen has his first number one album as *The River* tops the charts in the US. "Hungry Heart" enters the *Billboard* top 40 chart the same day. The song goes to #5 on November 15, becoming the first Top 10 song in Springsteen's career. *Audio* magazine's review of *The River* noted: "...there are a few tracks, most notably 'Hungry Heart,' which at last reveal that Bruce can sing in a voice that suits his tunes (credit that hurdled obstacle to Bob Clearmountain, who mixed that and one other tune)." More specifically, credit the speeding-up of the vocal track. Mike Tierney writes in *St. Petersburg Times*: "His turn toward commerciality is a mere smidgen of compromise. Current single 'Hungry Heart' reeks of Top-40ism and is one of his rare throwaways, but it has apparently been a primer for first-time listeners who need to be broken in slowly."

The performance of the new hit single on November 20 marks the beginning of a ritual, as the Chicago audience spontaneously begins singing the words. Describing the next show on November 23, Kit Rachlis writes that the band was convinced that the Chicago crowd's singing on "Hungry Heart" was "a fluke. Tonight, it happens again.... In the Capital Centre, with 18,000 people singing it bright and clear, I get goose bumps. Springsteen audiences are among the most benevolent in rock 'n' roll, but I've never seen a rock audience respond with such spontaneous and collective grace."

Four Madison Square Garden shows between November and December are sold by mail order and bring the most ticket requests in the history of the Garden to date. Many fans receive a letter that reads, "Dear Patron: We regret that we are unable

to fill your order for Bruce Springsteen tickets as more than 300,000 requests were received for the four concerts. Because of this overwhelming demand we were able to fill only one order for every four received...." Also because of scalpers—who, according to some reports, got more than half of the 21,246 available tickets for each show.

Of the Thanksgiving show on November 27, John Rockwell writes in the *New York Times*: "...Thursday's 245-minute performance (counting one 35-minute intermission) marked a new maturity. With no loss of energy, Mr. Springsteen has integrated his theatrics and lighting into the music better than ever before, and, in his new songs, has purged some of his more lurid textual excesses. He was also singing better than ever, and had the E Street Band playing at a new level of excellence.... Seeing Mr. Springsteen's effect on Thursday's audience, it was hard not to believe that he someday soon will make that next jump, staying true to rock's spirit, but bringing its message out beyond its current limits of class, age and race—and in so doing help inspire the country as a whole in the ways already suggested in his music."



The following night at the Garden, November 28, a unique version of "Ramrod" features lines that will later become "Open All Night." Robert Santelli reviews the show for the *Aquarian*, pointing out the concert's thematic structure: "The [first] set had a specific theme and shed light on the more serious side of the artist. It was easy to think of Springsteen as a musical Studs Terkel or a chronicler of the American Dream as he so vividly captured the spirit of the working man and the downtrodden who stubbornly refuse to give up the good fight. For those overly impatient to see Springsteen rock, the set may have been a bit weighty in parts. But for most in attendance, it was poignant and uplifting at the same time. The second set saw Springsteen and company step up the pace with an unabashed frenzy so powerful that many in the audience stood the entire 90 minutes...."

## December

The band breaks out "Santa Claus" for the first time this year on December 4 in Buffalo, and Springsteen and the band are off to spread more holiday cheer with three shows in Philly.



Jack Lloyd of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* calls this stand "the rock event of the year." In the December 8 paper, Lloyd refers to Springsteen's local roots as he writes, "His current concerts are, in a sense, a joyful homecoming celebration." But an event that night will change everything: after his December 8 Spectrum show, Bruce is told of the murder of John Lennon. On December 9, after deciding that the show must go on, Springsteen takes the stage at the Spectrum and tells the crowd, "If it wasn't for John Lennon, a lot of us would be in some place much different tonight. It's a hard world that asks you to live with a lot of things that are unlivable. And it's hard to come out here and play tonight, but there's nothing else to do." *Time* reports: "Then Bruce and the E Street Band tore into Springsteen's own anthem, 'Born to Run,' making it clear that playing was the best thing to do. Guitarist Steve Van Zandt let the tears roll down his face, and organist Danny Federici hit the board so hard he broke a key." Fred Schruers writes of the show in *Rolling Stone*: "I've seen people digging firebreaks to save their homes, and I've seen some desperate fist fights, and, God knows, I've seen hundreds of rock 'n' roll shows, but I have never seen a human being exert himself the way Springsteen did that night in Philly."

Following the December 15 and 16 Boston concerts, Kit Rachlis writes in the *Boston Phoenix*: "After John Lennon's murder, the world seemed suddenly different—for Springsteen, not even his own songs sounded the same. So when several kids winged plastic fluorescent sticks at the stage in the beginning of his Monday night Boston Garden concert, it was impossible not to flinch.... And then, as he has done in every concert I've ever attended, he jumped into the crowd during the show's third song. I usually find this

blind leap of faith on Springsteen's part exhilarating. But this time I held my stomach and searched the crowd for Mark David Chapman. The crowd instead held Springsteen aloft as he sang 'Tenth Avenue Freeze-out' and let him down easy when the climactic verse was over...."

In addition to two more Garden shows before Christmas, the December 28, 29, and 31 concerts in Uniondale, NY, make the third stand in the New York area in less than five weeks. Here, inspired by reading Klein's book, Springsteen debuts Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land." While generally hyped as four-hour marathons, performance time at concerts on this tour could actually be as short as two and a half hours, with a typical show somewhere in between. These are still long by any standards, and as Bruce soon tells journalist Michael Watts, "You gotta drain your band, drain your audience—so you leave something in its place." But by these Nassau Coliseum shows—with 106 songs over three nights—Springsteen is pushing the envelope. On December 31, Springsteen and the E Street Band play their longest show ever, at 38 songs and a full four hours. With "In the Midnight Hour" and "Auld Lang Syne," they ring in 1981.





# 1981

## January - March

*The River* tour—still not half over—has established and solidified once and for all Springsteen's position as rock superstar. Bruce and the band sweep both the *Rolling Stone* and *Creem* 1980 readers' poll awards, topping just about every applicable category. But with Springsteen regularly selling out sports arenas, his ability to relate to blue collar life and concerns begins to be called into question. Critic Jeff Tamarkin writes in the *Aquarian*: "It is difficult now to listen to Springsteen sing about working class lifestyles without cringing when you know damn well the man is not exactly working for minimum wage these days..."

The North American leg picks back up on January 20, with four dates in Canada, then down through the midwest into February. The album's second single, "Fade Away" b/w "Be True," is released in the US on February 3. After the February 7 Chicago concert, Bruce becomes ill and reschedules the next two shows to the end of the leg. He is still not feeling well as the tour heads into the South, but plays February 12 in Mobile, AL, where "This Land is Your Land" is played for the first time since the Nassau shows; the song soon becomes a tour staple. Rafael Alvarez soon writes in the *Sun*: "...the flannel-shirted Mr. Springsteen proved himself an authentic American hero. And nothing proved it more than his simple rendition of Woody Guthrie's 'This Land is Your Land.'" In a way that would have made H.L. Mencken proud, Mr. Springsteen introduced the song by telling the audience not to be taken in by the superpatriotism now in vogue." Heading into Florida for February 15 and 16 dates, Springsteen is suffering from laryngitis and fever. After the first night, a *St.*

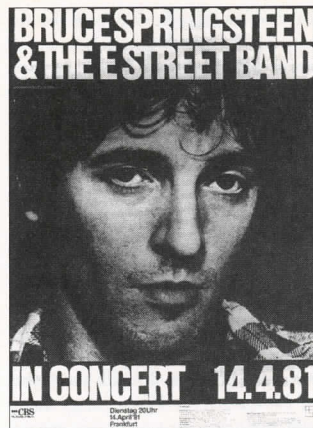
*Petersburg Times* headline reads: "Bruce Springsteen, not feeling his best, still delivers the best." By the second night he seems to be feeling better—for now.

On February 21, "Fade Away" enters the *Billboard* Top 40, peaking at #20. This will be the last single issued in the US until 1984, though other countries press various configurations from *The River*.

Bruce and the E Streeters close out this leg in Lexington, KY, and Indianapolis, IN, on March 4 and 5, concerts rescheduled because of Bruce's illness. But he's not out of the woods yet. On March 12, with less than a week to go before the European tour is scheduled to start in the UK, Bruce feels too poorly to make it. Landau calls UK promoter Harvey Goldsmith, and on March 13, an announcement is made postponing the UK dates: "Bruce is simply exhausted and suffering from the assorted ailments that can crop up during a grueling tour." Barbara Carr tells the UK press, "It got so bad that he couldn't talk, yet somehow he made it onstage. He didn't feel well at the beginning of last week, and we thought, 'uh-oh.' Bruce was so looking forward to his European dates and meeting his fans. It was a hard decision for him to make." After his infamous 1975 performance in London, Springsteen isn't taking any chances. The UK shows will now close the European leg, and when he reschedules for May and June, he adds an extra three UK dates.

On March 15 at 2:38 am, Philip C. Testa, AKA "The Chicken Man," is killed by a bomb on the front porch of his house.

With a month off between the US and European tours, Springsteen uses the time to record with Gary US Bonds at the Power Station in New York. What Springsteen originally planned as a couple of songs turns into an album project, which he asks Van Zandt to produce. The album comes together quickly, as it must; Steve calls Bonds "a producer's dream. He opens his mouth and it's a take." Bonds later says, "Recording [*Dedication*] was a blast. We only had four weeks to get it done so things were spontaneous—just the way I like them. One night, Bruce woke me up at four in the morning to play 'This Little Girl,' a new song he had written for the album. I told him that it would sound just as good if he played it for me the next morning." Bruce donates and co-produces four songs, including a reworked cover, "Jole Blon." Garry Tallent is credited



as associate producer, and the entire E Street Band takes part in the sessions during this month off.

## April - June

Bruce and the E Streeters head to Europe, landing in Frankfurt on April 5, two days before first show. In Hamburg on April 7, they begin their first full-scale European tour, appropriately debuting John Fogerty's "Rockin' All Over the World."

The venues are smaller than what the band has been playing—Hamburg's Congress Center holds 4,000—but they face the challenge of playing for a different kind of crowd in Europe, and in many cases overcoming a language barrier. Nevertheless, the shows in Germany are a rousing success, setting the tone for the rest of the tour. Van Zandt later tells Dave Marsh, "Just before we went to Europe, as the American part of the tour ended, we started to focus in on musical things.... We discovered some major things that were going on, and the first time we had a chance to really try them out was

on the European tour. Combined with the fact that we were expecting a little coldness from the audience, we tended to play for each other for the first time, I think, in many years. We just tended to pull in a little bit, and consequently we were just... great."

*Dedication*, the first of two "come-back" albums for Bonds, is released on April 15, as the band is between Frankfurt and Munich. According to Bonds, 22 labels turned the album down before EMI; *Dedication* will go on to crack the Top 30. "This Little Girl," penned by Bruce, will soon go to #11 and become Bonds' first Top 40 hit since 1962.

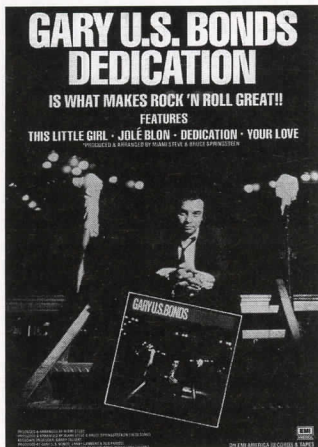
In Paris, Bruce introduces "Independence Day" by saying, "I'm 31 now and I just started to read the history of the United States." He is referring to Henry Steele Commager

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

### Bruce Springsteen Tour has been postponed.

Rescheduled dates are as shown below. Keep your ticket and turn up only on the rescheduled night. Refunds can be obtained by returning your ticket to point of purchase by 5th April 1981.

Venue	Old Date	New Date
Brighton Centre	March 17 valid for	May 26
Wembley Arena	March 19 valid for	May 29
Wembley Arena	March 20 valid for	May 30
Manchester Apollo	March 23 valid for	May 13
Manchester Apollo	March 24 valid for	May 14
Birmingham N.E.C.	March 27 valid for	June 7
Birmingham N.E.C.	March 28 valid for	June 8
Edinburgh Playhouse	March 30 valid for	May 16
Newcastle City Hall	March 31 valid for	May 11
Wembley Arena	April 2 valid for	June 1
Wembley Arena	April 3 valid for	June 2
Wembley Arena	April 4 valid for	June 4



For the *River* tour, Otto and Son created unique backstage passes for every show, including die-cut and foil stamped designs.





and Allan Nevins' *A Pocket History of the United States*, which he had gotten a copy of back in the US and is now reading on the European leg. Bruce is clearly very affected by this book, and he will mention and recommend it again and again in upcoming shows.

Peter Jurew reviews the April 18 show in *The Paris Free Voice*: "A dumpy sports arena in the far northern reaches of Paris.... Springsteen has changed his style of dress, the band looks chubby, Clarence Clemons does more on tambourine than saxophone, but there's an electricity—magic in the air—that only the very best rock and roll can generate. Three and a half hours later, his hair soaked and clothes rung with sweat, Springsteen leaves with a blue-lit version of Elvis Presley's 'Can't Help Falling in Love.' Folks from New Jersey are in evidence by the show of signs. The French have been satiated, the rockers blown away. Some things change, but there is nothing like a Bruce Springsteen concert." On April 19, another Presley song is debuted in Paris as Bruce plays his new arrangement of a song called "Follow That Dream."

The tour continues throughout Europe, as Bruce and the Band get closer to the closing UK dates. England is primed for Springsteen's return: within the last month there the *No Nukes* movie has opened, Marsh's *Born to Run* has been published, and, on May 3, a new single from *The River* is released, "The

## STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN MAY 8, 1981 Teardrops on the City

In May 1981, I was 17 turning 18 a few weeks later. I was living in a small town in the south of Sweden, and my only experience of Bruce Springsteen was the new album, *The River*, but four school friends and I decided that Bruce would be a cool thing to see. The show in Stockholm sold out immediately, and we didn't get any tickets. I thought that was that, but a few days later a second show was added.

This was the very first real rock 'n' roll concert I ever attended, so I really started at the top! Johaneshtadion is an ice hockey stadium with a capacity of 10,000 spectators and was at the time Stockholm's largest indoor arena (in 1989 the Globe Arena was built next door, and it was at the Globe that Bruce kicked off his 1992/93 world tour). When the house got dark and the band started to play what I thought was a very strange tune, "Run Through the Jungle," I wasn't sure it was going to be a good show. Then they kicked into "Prove It All Night." The whole arena just went crazy, everyone got to their feet, and then I understood what all the talk was about. From that point on Bruce had the audience in the palm of his hand. Soon came "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out," and Bruce and Clarence went into the audience, which I thought was really cool.

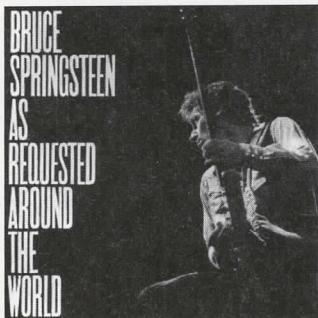
I was really surprised that Bruce talked so much in between the songs, mostly the slower ones, and tried really hard to get us to understand what his songs were about. The most powerful moment of the whole night came when Bruce introduced "Point Blank" with a very long speech and absolutely everyone was quiet! This was pure magic, and the band and the audience were like one on "Point Blank," which was so sad and so beautiful.

For the encore, they got back on stage and tore into "Born to Run" and then played a really cool '50s rock 'n' roll medley that I later learned was called the "Detroit Medley." I really dug this because I was very much into Elvis, Chuck Berry, Eddie Cochran and the other greats from the golden era of rock 'n' roll. After the most tender tribute to Elvis ("Can't Help Falling in Love") which moved everyone in the house, it was back to party mode with "Rockin' All Over the World." This song is very well known over here in Status Quo's hit version. Then the house lights came on, and roughly a third of the audience had left when the band came back again after five minutes to play a superb party version of "Twist and Shout" with the house lights still on.

The thing that was so special was that Bruce and the band were able to take everything that is good in rock 'n' roll, from the '50s to the present, and compress it into a three-hour show. The sad thing is that I started at the top, and it has been downhill from there: I clearly remember leaving the concert and thinking that it could never ever be any better than this! I have seen Bruce 14 times between 1981 and 1997 but it has never been close to this night.

—Lars Petersson





A promotional sampler released in 1981.

River" b/w "Independence Day." A three-track 12-inch for "The River" is also issued to coincide with the tour. But before they cross the channel, Bruce and the band return on May 7 and 8 to Stockholm, one of the few cities on the continent that they had played in 1975. The return is triumphant, documented on the legendary bootlegs *Follow That Dream* and *Teardrops on the City*. Clarence finds Tina Sandgren, who he had met there in 1975, and the two get engaged. She will accompany the Big Man back to the States.

Between May 11 and June 8, Springsteen and the E Street Band play 16 shows in the UK, beginning at Newcastle City Hall, the smallest hall of the tour. On May 13, Bruce dedicates "This Land is Your Land" to the late Bob Marley, who had just died in New York, and also debuts "Johnny Bye Bye." Patrick Humphries reviews the Manchester show in *Melody Maker*: "The lights formed a Union Jack at the back, and Springsteen was alone on a spell-binding 'This Land is Your Land.'... 'Rosalita' aroused just the response you'd expect from an audience starved for Springsteen for five years, with only that one *Whistle Test* clip of the song to keep them going.... It was like a dream come true for most of the people there and a triumph for the band. A performance which balanced the exuberant rockers with the reflective ballads. A show with so many show-stoppers you wonder

how it ever got started."

Back in the US, the May 20 *New York Post* reports: "Rock superstar Bruce Springsteen is reported going ahead with plans to star in a movie based on his biggest album, *The River*.... According to a source close to Springsteen, manager Jon Landau is trying to package the rock idol from New Jersey as a modern-day James Dean. Plans to make the movie based on *The River* have been kept top secret, but at least one major studio has reportedly made an offer to underwrite the project." The article mentions two other film deals involving Springsteen: remakes of *Breathless* and *The Wild One*. Speaking to a journalist in the UK, Bruce soon dismisses these rumors—he'd consider a movie based on one of his songs, but "that don't look likely. A film takes an hour and a half. My songs are only three minutes long. And say it all, brother, say it all."

On May 29, Bruce "finally" returns to London with the first night of six, through June 5, at Wembley Arena. Reviewing the show in *New Musical Express*, Paul DuNoyer points out, "I'll prove it all night for you!"—the opening number's impetuous brag takes on new meaning, becomes a rousing statement of intent." Indeed, the show proves Springsteen's abilities beyond any lingering doubt. DuNoyer continues: "Springsteen, the man it's become common to call the last great rock 'n' roll star, earned his long-anticipated London triumph with a solid three-hour show of passion, grit and dedication enough to put any other so-called heroes to shame." On this crucial night, the band daringly premieres a new song, Jimmy Cliff's "Trapped," which Bruce came across in Amsterdam. He tells UK journalist Paolo Hewitt, "I thought I knew every Jimmy Cliff song, but I heard this on a cassette at an airport."

Hugh Fielder sums up the London stand in *Sounds*: "Everyone can relax. He is everything you've ever thought he was and more.... All Springsteen had to do was enjoy himself. And the



more he did the better the show became. This time he couldn't blow it. He's not the future anymore, he's the most exciting American rock star around. Which is a damn sight more fun than being the future.... Any doubts he might have had about the London audience must have been dispelled the first time he held the microphone out towards the audience and heard his words bellowed back at him without a moment's hesitation. It wasn't even one of his better known songs either. A moment later he tipped into the audience and continued singing among a swaying, jostling mob who carried him around on their shoulders before depositing him back on the stage again. The show had been running less than quarter of an hour. It was almost cheeky—resting on laurels he hadn't yet earned over here. But he has now, so there!"

The European leg comes to a close in Birmingham, where on June 7 Pete Townshend joins on guitar, and on the next and final night the band wraps it up with "Rockin' All Over the World." Dave Edmunds is among many notables at the June 8 show, and *Rolling Stone* calls him the "most surprised well-wisher of the tour," as backstage after the show Springsteen gives him the new song "From Small Things."

Back in the US, the band takes the rest of the month off. Clarence spends the time preparing to open his new club, Big Man's West, in Red Bank, NJ. Springsteen visits his parents in California, where he also performs two nights in a row. On June 14 he performs five songs at the Survival Sunday anti-nuke benefit in L.A., where he is introduced by Ron Kovic, author of *Born on the Fourth of July*. The following night, June 15, Bruce jams at a sold-out Gary US Bonds show in San Francisco. He rests at home and spends time at the beach before his July homecoming: the first Jersey shows of the tour.

## July - September

While the first US leg covered a lot of ground, the summer '81 US leg hits select cities for some quality time. As with the rest of the tour, these shows sell out easily, even with multiple nights at the same venue. For the opening stand in New Jersey, the *New York Post* reports that "some 120,000 tickets were available but there were 400,000 mail order ticket requests before they stopped counting."

The band's homecoming is a series of six shows as the first act to play the new \$85-million Brendan T. Byrne Arena at the Meadowlands. Publicist Ren Gravitt tells *Circus*, "We were originally thinking of having twenty shows, but his schedule wouldn't permit it." On July 1, only a day before the first concert, workmen are still putting up wallpaper and ceiling panels. Promoter John Scher says, "I've promoted concerts in New Jersey for more than ten years, but this is the thrill of them all. Having Bruce Springsteen open this beautiful building is a dream come true for all of us."

On July 2, opening night, Barbara Demick writes: "A single cry of 'New Jersey' from the idol was enough to bring the house to its feet for a full minute." Bruce welcomes the homestate crowd with "Born to Run" and debuts his cover of Tom Waits' "Jersey Girl" on this first night at the Meadowlands. After the show, he tells journalists backstage, "It was unbelievable tonight. I think it was the best show ever. Well, it's hard to say ever, but it was pretty

amazing. When we got onstage the noise from the audience was so loud, I couldn't hear the band. I felt like we were the Beatles." The Jersey stand ends on July 9, after many US premieres, two guest appearances from Bonds, and several performances that will later make it on the *Live* box. Springsteen also meets Vietnam Veterans of America president Bob Muller this week. Muller is invited down to the Meadowlands after Springsteen read Kovic's book and wanted to find a way to help. Bruce and Bob quickly strike up a friendship, and soon arrangements are made for the first L.A. show to be a VVA benefit.

Bruce helps out another friend as Clarence's Big Man's West—a former bowling alley—has its grand opening





**BOB MULLER** President of Vietnam Veterans of America, an organization Springsteen has supported extensively for nearly 20 years:

**B**ruce has stayed a friend, a supporter. He is in my book unique for having taken an interest in us and sustained an interest and a friendship. I have said that we would not have been able to organize a Vietnam Veteran movement without Bruce's support. When he came forward in 1981, we had gone as far as we could. He gave legitimacy, recognition and funding to a movement that wasn't popular, because it had been a failed experience in Vietnam. But within 30 days of his performing a benefit concert for us, we suddenly were able to organize concerts by Pat Benatar and Charlie Daniels. It had completely resuscitated us.

I remember he didn't sleep the night before the concert. He was nervous to go before an audience and give a talk without a guitar in front of him as part of the show. Before the concert, he said, 'This is why I'm doing what I'm doing, and I want you people to think about it.' He spoke from the heart and he spoke poetically and he was great. It took a lot for him to do what he did."

—Interview by Robert Makin



**BIG MAN'S WEST**  
129 MONMOUTH ST.  
RED BANK, N.J. 07701

on a very hot July 11. Springsteen and the E Street Band, joined by Bonds for "Jole Blon," play six songs before Bruce declares, "Game called on account of heat!"

From July 13 to July 19 the band returns to the Spectrum in Philly. Bruce gets a sore throat soon afterward and moves the Chicago and Cincinnati shows to the end of tour, but he and the band soon work their way west to California. Special guests along the way include Southside Johnny on July 28 and 29; and Mitch Ryder on August 12 in Detroit.

The band arrives in Los Angeles a day before they are to play, and Springsteen spends August 19 at a vet center. The first of the shows at the L.A. Sports Arena, on August 20, is *A Night for the Vietnam Veteran*. A nervous Bruce opens the show without his guitar, introducing Bob Muller, who gives a short speech before bringing Bruce back out: "This is the first step in ending the silence that has surrounded Vietnam.... It's a little bit ironic that... when you remember the divisions within our own generation about the war, it ultimately turns out to be the symbol of our generation—rock 'n' roll—that brings us together...." Of Springsteen's speech before the show Max later says, "Man, I almost burst into tears. It was one of the most moving things you've ever heard. Probably one of the most emotional, moving shows we played. You've got to picture it: Bruce gives this speech about Vietnam being like walking down a dark street at night, and you see somebody getting a beating in an alley. You just keep on walking because you don't want to get involved, but you feel guilty. He likened that to Vietnam. Then we go onstage and on both sides of us were platforms for the paraplegics in wheelchairs. We go out and open with 'Who'll Stop the Rain.' And there are these guys without arms

and legs. It was so emotional. We played for them. We played great that night."

"The Ballad of Easy Rider" is played for the only time at this show. Jon Landau tells Robert Hilburn that Bruce "just worked it up during intermission because he wanted a nice, healing-type song to cap off the evening. I don't know if he'll ever do the song again. He keeps changing to keep himself and the audience and the band involved." The benefit raises an estimated \$100,000, split between the VVA and the Los Angeles Mental Health Clinic.

Five more nights at the Sports Arena include guest Tom Waits for his own "Jersey Girl" on August 24, and "Plane Wreck at Los Gatos (Deportees)" on the final night, August 28. Bruce will not play this Guthrie song again for 15 years.

A couple more California stops follow, then back to Chicago and Cincinnati for rescheduled concerts. *The River* tour ends on September 14 in Cincinnati, after almost a year

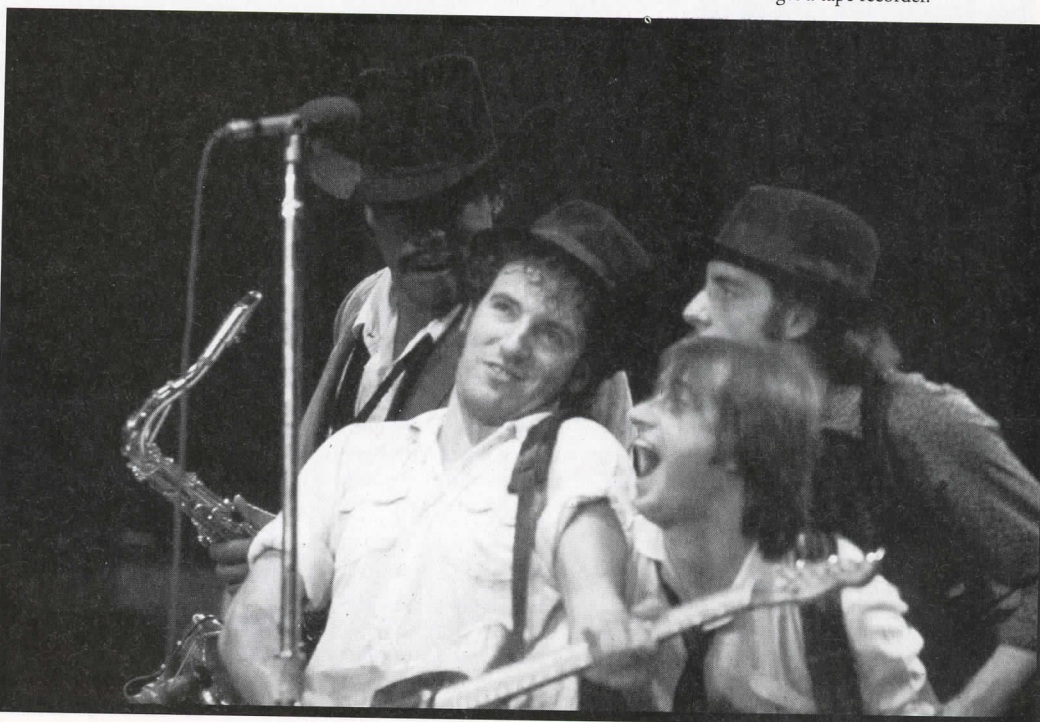
on the road, 13 countries, and nearly 140 shows—one of the longest and most successful tours in rock history to this point. *The River* has sold 2 million copies, but it is the tour that has cemented Springsteen's reputation. This will turn out to be the E Street Band's last show for 33 months and Steve's final show as a member. Back at the hotel after the show, the band and crew celebrate until dawn: "The Concluding Rites of Bossmania 1981," as the festivities are dubbed, according to Christopher Connelly. Springsteen flies back to Newark on the morning of September 15.

## October - December

Soon after the tour, Clarence gets married in Maui, with Springsteen on hand as best man. Other band members attend as well, but Steve Van Zandt is back in the studio starting work on another Bonds record and one of his own. When Bruce returns to New Jersey, the lease has run out on the Telegraph Hill house and he moves into a rented house on

a reservoir in Colt's Neck, alone after a year on the road. Within a month of being home he begins writing songs at his desk, and the rest of the year will be a very lonely yet prolific period; he later tells Kurt Loder, "It just seemed to be a mood I was in at the time.... I didn't go out much, and for some reason I just started to write." He is inspired by reading Flannery O'Connor's short stories and seeing Terrence Malick's *Badlands* on television, and his songwriting becomes a meditation on isolation and its effects. Ironically, it is perhaps the immense success of the *River* tour that contributes most to Springsteen feeling "empty." As he later tells Steve Pond, "I guess you get to a place where your old answers and your old dreams don't really work anymore, so you have to step into something new. For me, there was that particular moment when I had to put my old dreams down, because I had grown beyond them. I suppose I had a particular time when I felt pretty empty." The feeling provides the catalyst for an incredible outpouring of songs. He had already gotten a start, writing "Mansion on the Hill" at the end of the tour, and by December he has written the rest of what will become his next album.

A childrens' compilation called *In Harmony 2* is released on December 10, the first release of Springsteen and the E Street Band's live "Santa Claus is Coming to Town." Columbia planned to issue "Santa Claus" as a single, but thought it might hurt sales of the album. By Christmas, Bruce is ready to prep his songs for the studio, figuring that if he works out the songs fully ahead of time, he and the band might save time in the studio. He asks guitar tech Mike Batlan to get a tape recorder.





# 1982

## January - March

Batlan brings a Teac Tascam Series 144 four-track recorder to the house in Colt's Neck. As legend has it, Springsteen sits down in a creaky chair with his guitar and harmonica on **January 3**. He begins with "Nebraska," and in short order has a demo tape of the songs he wrote during the fall. Springsteen has since said that he recorded the songs over a couple of days; **January 3** could actually be the day he compiled the tape. Regardless, for the next several days, the cassette—the only copy of what will later become his sixth album—is carried around without a case in Springsteen's back pocket. He soon gives the tape to Landau, but nothing else will be done with the material for the next few months.

Bruce begins to rejoin the community, as a **January 5** jam with Lord Gunner at the Stone Pony marks the first of over 40 guest appearances in clubs this year. In **late January**, recording plans begin to take shape, and Plotkin is contacted to see if he

can make it to New York in May. The E Street Band is soon reconvened—not for a new Bruce album at first, but for the follow-up to Bonds' *Dedication*. Bruce donates seven songs to Gary, including "Rendezvous" and the new "Out of Work." Van Zandt says later, "He's so good, you really want to hit him every now and then.... We were doing the new Gary US Bonds album. 'Oh, I wrote seven songs for it last night.' You know? You just want to kill him." Songwriting aside, *On the Line* is more of a collaboration, produced by both Springsteen and Miami Steve, who fly to Los Angeles to finish the record with Plotkin. While in Los Angeles this spring, Bruce and Roy Bittan play on Donna Summer's recording of Bruce's "Protection."

## April - September

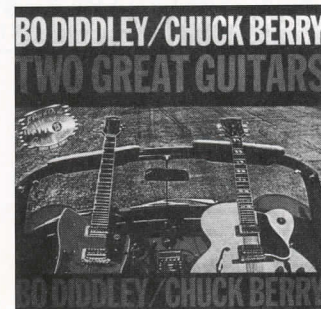
Springsteen is back in Jersey and soon kicks off an extended summer of surprise club gigs. With **April 9, 10 and 11** with Beaver Brown at Big Man's West, Bruce is jamming on practically a weekly basis, at the Stone Pony, Big Man's West and the Fast Lane. Regular cohorts include Beaver Brown, John Eddie and the Front Street Runners, Clarence and

the Red Bank Rockers, and Sonny Kenn. A Big Man's West manager, Gary Holmes, says, "People leave him alone here. If they don't, we make sure they do. You see, if Bruce is hassled, he doesn't play. If people start asking him questions, he'll just leave. And we don't want that."

Serious work begins in **April** on the follow-up to *The River*. Plotkin, having worked all spring on records for Van Zandt and Bonds, flies out from L.A. for his first chance to be involved on a Springsteen album from the beginning. The band soon starts rehearsing, playing so well that they soon head straight to the Power Station rather than waste any time. But stabs at songs like "Atlantic City" and "Mansion on the Hill" aren't really working. After a couple of weeks Springsteen changes his approach, putting aside the quieter songs. A live, spontaneous "Born in the USA" is a keeper, and over two or three weeks in May, with Bruce writing songs in the studio, the band records a slew of rock songs (including more than half of the songs that will eventually be released on *Born in the USA*). These sessions are a great success and capture the band playing at its peak. Steve later tells Ed Sciak: "We did them completely live. If he wanted to sing it again, we played it again. There are no overdubs. It was

just an experiment. We were known as one of the best bands around, and we just wanted to prove it."

But Bruce himself is still thinking about his demo tape. A&R rep Peter Philbin says, "He had written and recorded these songs, and when he tried to fit the band in, it didn't work for him." Max tells *Rolling Stone*, "It became obvious fairly soon that what Bruce wanted on the record was what he already had on the demo. The band, though we played the hell out of them, tended to obscure the starkness and the vibe he was going for." Springsteen tries to recapture that vibe by re-recording in the studio, with no luck. In June the answer becomes clear, when Landau finally voices the option of releasing the

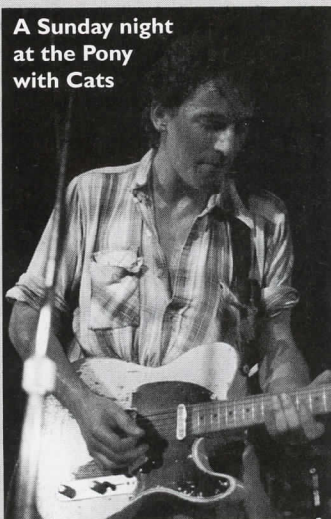


The LP cover that inspired the design of *Nebraska*.

## 1982 Club Tour Diary

BY HOLLY CARA

### A Sunday night at the Pony with Cats



It hardly seems possible that a person could have seen Bruce Springsteen play an average of once a week in 1982, in clubs that held crowds of 200 to 800 people. Sometimes, in fact, he played twice a week and once in a while even three times a week. For a handful of us who were lucky enough to live in New Jersey or the surrounding areas during 1982, the summer began as early as February or March and ended on October 3 at the Stone Pony with a 14-song set. In the beginning, going to Asbury every time we felt he might show up seemed frivolous, but Bruce often obliged us with his presence and many times played as well. As this gradually became more and more frequent—when Cats became something of a Sunday night ritual—one almost began to feel that it

### • 2/20/82 with Beaver Brown, Big Man's West

Bruce had long, curly hair tonight, absolutely the longest I have ever seen it. He looked incredibly happy, healthy, and real. During the chorus of "Money"—"I want money/That's what I want"—I was thinking of taking the \$5 bill in my shirt pocket and putting it on the stage. The very next moment coins and bills

went flying through the air. A supreme rock and roll moment. This is the Reagan era, jobs are scarce, and Bruce sings this ancient rock 'n' roll lyric to immediate, literal response. Set: *Ain't That A Shame/Money/You Can't Sit Down*

### • 4/11/82 with John Eddie and the Front St Runners, Big Man's West

The club wasn't very crowded tonight—there are still many unenlightened souls unaware of the budding excellence of this band. A generous attendance estimate would be about 75. At the end, standing by the stage, the lack of crowds allowed us to see Bruce walking backstage to go on! It was an incredible scene, sort of like how you might imagine it would be to see him play a high school dance. Long Tall Sally/Rockin' All Over the World/Proud Mary/Carol

### • 5/29/82 with Beaver Brown and Southside Johnny, Big Man's West

The room was packed to capacity tonight, with Max and Danny also joining in onstage. Before "Summertime Blues" Bruce said, "Happy summer to everybody!" Little Latin Lupe Lu/Summertime Blues/Round and Round/High School Confidential

### • 6/20/82 with Cats on a Smooth Surface, Stone Pony

This was my first adventure in the land of the Cat People, as we grew to call it. The first thing one notices about the Stone Pony is the extreme lowness of the



At Big Man's West with Beaver Brown, 5/29/82



original demo tape as the album. With that decision made, this leg of recording comes to a close, and work begins to convert the tape into a releasable record.

*On the Line* is released on June 12, a day that also provides a good example of the line that Springsteen is managing to straddle at this point in his career: He joins Jackson Browne to play for a crowd of 500,000 at the Rally for Disarmament in Central Park, and later that night he drives to Jersey for a small club jam with Sonny Kenn at Big Man's West. "Out of Work" from *On the Line* enters the Top 40 on July 10, going to #21.

The mastering process has proven to be more difficult and time-consuming than expected—which is quite ironic, after Bruce has finally managed to record an album so quickly. An amazing series of technical obstacles—tape speeds, fluctuations in Bruce's recording equipment—has everyone baffled, and at one point they consider a cassette-only release. As Bruce later describes it, "It was hard to get on an album; that took us some time, because the recording was so strange that it wouldn't get onto wax. I don't know what the physics are about, but it was hard to get on record without it distorting really strange." Finally Plotkin, experimenting at Atlantic

Records Studios, tries cutting a master at a very low recording level (-7, according to Marsh's *Glory Days*), and it works.

On July 17, Springsteen plays with the Iron City Houserockers for the first time, marking the beginning of a friendship with frontman Joe Grushecky. July 23 brings a high-profile guest appearance with the Stray Cats at the Fast Lane. Meanwhile, Clarence is spending the summer touring with his Red Bank Rockers, and Max begins work on his book, *The Big Beat*. Bruce and art director Andrea Klein begin working on album cover for the as-yet-untitled sixth record. Bruce has been inspired by Robert Frank's 1958 book of photographs, *The Americans*. He shows the book to Klein, who introduces him to photographer David Kennedy. At a photo session, Kennedy shoots photos of Bruce that will be used on single picture sleeves, but for the LP cover they decide on a shot Kennedy had already taken in the Midwest.

In August—while Donna Summer's "Protection" is released with Springsteen's searing guitar solo—Bruce gives the final go-ahead for his own stark, somber album. Philbin says, "What this record will sell, I don't think the company knows, and I don't think Bruce really cares."

**SONNY KENN** One of the Jersey Shore's most extraordinary guitar players and leader of Sonny & the Starfires with original E Street drummer Vini "Mad Dog" Lopez in the mid-1960s. He went on to form the Sonny Kenn Blues Band and Maelstrom with Southside Johnny Lyon and then the Wild Ideas, one of the hottest Shore bands of the 1980s:

**T**he Wild Ideas were playing the [Monmouth] County Fair [on July 23, 1982]. We were opening for the Nighthawks, and we had set up in front of the other band, so we were out of the lights, and it was hard to see. Bruce showed up and whispered, "Sonny, mind if I jam?" We went through a bunch of old rock 'n' roll songs, one after another. People didn't realize who it was because we were in the dark. But the music was real happening, and once people realized who it was, it turned into a big party. What was cool about those times was when jamming, at the end of a song, we'd have a part where everyone takes a solo. Bruce would step back, and I would introduce everybody. I'd introduce him as just part of the band. Jamming, to me, it's about doing your part, trading off licks, having a good time. After going through all he had gone through, he knew what it meant to jam with somebody, trade licks without pretending to be the superstar thing.

—Interview by Robert Makin

Bruce is still working on the title, considering *January 3, 1982* as well as several song titles from the record, but finally narrows it down to *Nebraska* at the last minute. Now that Klein has the title—and has been shown an old Chuck Berry album cover that Bruce likes—the *Nebraska* packaging comes together quickly. The mechanical is turned in

along with the master tape to CBS.

In early September, Cleveland's WMMS plays the new album. Program director John Gorman tells *Rolling Stone*, "There's almost nothing to compare it to. It reminds me of when Dylan went electric.... The audience either loved it or hated it.... Given the state of AOR radio, I have the feeling most stations won't touch

stage (not even as high as one's kneecap). During "Twist and Shout" Bruce danced all the way down to the floor, out of range of the lights. *Come On, Let's Go/Little Latin Lupe Lu/Sweet Little Sixteen/Round and Round/Lucille/Twist and Shout*

**•6/27/82 with Clarence Clemons and the Red Bank Rockers, Big Man's West; with Cats, Stone Pony**

Big Man's wasn't all that crowded tonight, considering that CC & The Rockers generally bring in a huge crowd. Bruce joined them for "10th Avenue Freeze-out" (words fail me). Afterwards, he stood in the audience and watched the rest of the show. Meanwhile, my friends and I stepped back from the front to make sure we all had enough to get into the Pony (which is open one hour later than Big Man's). Bruce was standing right behind us as the Rockers began "Fire." When they got to the pause, damned if Bruce didn't suddenly charge through the audience and jump onto the stage to sing the last verse with Clarence! I wouldn't believe it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. We drove at an illegal speed to the Pony (a drive of roughly 25 minutes; we made it in ten) because there was a recent night when Bruce had played with both the Rockers and Cats. Bruce was about five people behind us in line at the Pony until the bouncers noticed him and let him in the other door. He joined Cats for the encores. *Come On, Let's Go/From Small Things/Sweet Little Sixteen/Lucille/Round and Round/Twist and Shout*

**•8/7/82 with Beaver Brown, Big Man's West**

Tonight he might have surpassed any other small club appearance with two of the songs, "Lucille" and "Twist and Shout." In the middle of "Lucille" he brought the band down and proceeded to close his eyes and relate a dream landscape in which he goes looking for his wild child but he can't find her. It built in intensity until he finally plunged back into the song—this interlude soon grew into a whole song, "On the Prowl," on October 3. During "Twist and Shout" he broke a string, so he put the guitar down and danced his way through the song. At one point, he climbed on top of the piano and did that amazingly casual leaning-on-the-hand stance. As they left the stage Bruce said, "Beaver Brown!"—and as an afterthought, "and me!" *Ready Teddy/From Small Things/Jersey Girl/Lucille/Do You Wanna Dance/Twist and Shout*

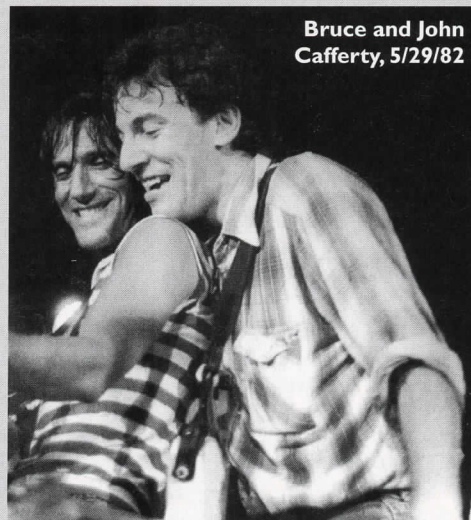
**•9/19/82 with Cats, Stone Pony**

We'd gone to our favorite hangout but couldn't get a table, so wandered over

to the Pony by chance. Bruce hadn't played with Cats in almost a month, and the club was nearly empty. Bruce, however, was there. It was just about 12:30, and Cats were due for their second set (of three). The atmosphere was quite casual, quite unlike the chaotic climate of the summertime. Suddenly, people started packing themselves against the stage, and we realized that Bruce was on. There couldn't have been more than 50 or 75 people, because with all of them against the stage it only filled about half the dance floor. He played nearly an hour. Twice he jumped off-stage into the audience to dance. It was a fascinating and unbelievable night; it seemed like he would not stop. *Ready Teddy/From Small Things/Come On Let's Go/Lucille/Come On Over to My Place/Round and Round/Havin' a Party/Jersey Girl/Woolly Bully/Louie Louie/High-Heeled Sneakers/Twist and Shout*

**•10/3/82 with Cats, Stone Pony**

It wasn't too crowded tonight, but everyone seemed to know subconsciously that this was the end of the magic. Bruce was soon to go to California to mix the next album. He did the second set again, and it was such a great night it didn't even feel like the end of the dream. But before "Twist and Shout" he turned to the band and said, "Let's bring it home, boys," and there was a slow fist squeezing my heart. *From Small Things/Come On Let's Go/Round and Round/Open All Night/Jersey Girl/On the Prowl/Do You Wanna Dance/Lucille/Woolly Bully/Louie Louie/Rock Baby Rock/Come On Over to My Place/Havin' a Party/Twist and Shout*



Bruce and John Cafferty, 5/29/82

HOLLY CARA PHOTO



# Sand Into Gold BY THOMAS PEELE

**W**hen a bomb of plastic explosives, finishing nails and shotgun pellets terminated the life of Philadelphia mob king Philip Testa as he tried to open his home's front door on a cold March night in 1981, few people noticed. Testa, 56, was far from a glamorous don and had orchestrated his Mafia minions for less than a year following the slaying of Angelo Bruno. Who would ever write a folksong about him?

Within a year, however, Testa was immortalized in verse. Ask most Bruce Springsteen fans who Philip Testa was and you'll likely get a blank stare. But inquire about "The Chicken Man" and the answer will inevitably include the words *Atlantic City*.

The nickname, derived from childhood work on a poultry farm, and his death, which came a couple of hours after the bomb blew the front door 30 feet from its hinges, put Philip "Chicken Man" Testa on Springsteen's sixth and darkest album. A mobster attempting to control the East Coast's first and then-fledgling gambling city made perfect fodder for a record about desperate times, and "Atlantic City" is *Nebraska*'s most timely and telling exposé.

As Springsteen began writing new songs after *The River* tour, a few years after New Jersey's first legal casino opened on the Atlantic City Boardwalk in 1978, La Cosa Nostra was deeply involved in trying to siphon off money from the gambling industry. Unlike in Las Vegas, the mob didn't own gaming halls or skim their profits. Its infiltration came through ancillary businesses and labor unions. The backdoor entries, especially into bargaining units representing roofers and hotel workers, were difficult to police and prosecute. But they existed in a seamy underworld of murder, political corruption and extortion. A mayor went to jail for trying to sell an old city dump to Testa's successors. The land had instantly become worth millions when it was zoned for casinos. There was suddenly money in Atlantic City, and it offered organized crime an opportunity that didn't exist in South Philadelphia: economic expansion.

Springsteen's writing shows he was keenly aware of the events in Southern New Jersey. His accurate, realistic portrayal showed that Springsteen understood Atlantic City. He got it. The gambling commission (formally known as the Casino Control Commission) was indeed hanging on by the skin of his teeth in the early '80s. The racket boys were all over town and people were scared of what they would do. After state voters approved gambling in 1976, then-Governor Brendan Byrne stood on the Boardwalk and told the mob: "Keep your filthy hands out of Atlantic City. Keep the hell out of our state." Testa, then rising through the mob's ranks, and his boys, scoffed. To them, Atlantic City was worth killing—and dying—for.

News accounts were vivid and probably provided Springsteen the bulk of his factual basis for the song. But he was also far from a distant interloper. His words, sung in a burdened, almost gaunt voice, sound like Atlantic City feels and seems, past and present. Were the death and rebirth references in the chorus allusions to the desperate narrator's luck or the seedy city itself? Atlantic City became a ghost town after it hosted the 1964 Democratic National Convention, and the media focused as much on the city's decay and poor residents

as it did on LBJ's acceptance speech. The 1976 casino vote was a desperate attempt to resurrect a perished resort. When the first betting parlor opened in '78, people relieved themselves where they stood rather than give up a place at the tables. But the road to prosperity is a long and arduous one. Twenty years later Atlantic City remains only a few strides from its starting place.

Thousands of gamblers roll into the "America's Favorite Playground" on buses every day. Some are as haggard and frantic for a winning streak as Springsteen's narrator. Springsteen sings of winning and losing, but this is the loser's song. Winners take the bus home happy. Losers find a guy for whom to do a favor. In the end the character has to do whatever he can to come out ahead. Does he go to work as a mob grunt? Maybe, maybe not; in Atlantic City a "favor" can constitute anything from arranging for a hooker, to giving a politician a campaign contribution, to gunning down a local judge.

Does it make any difference who the favor's for? The point is he's lost his opportunity to choose.

As this man struggled not to be caught on the wrong side of that line, the municipality itself waged war against horrific blight as a permanent underclass of unemployable poor struggled beneath the casinos' raging neon. It still does.

In some physical respects, Atlantic City has changed greatly since director Arnold Levine ushered Springsteen into the MTV age with a grainy, black and white video that

remains the best short film ever made about the town. There are more hotels, a massive convention center, blocks of new housing. The mob, in its traditional Italian/Sicilian make-up, is as stifled as the Chicken Man is dead. The toughest gambling regulations in the country saw to that through the '80s and '90s, but it came with a price. Many believed the industry was over-regulated, almost strangled. The mob was beaten back to Camden and Philadelphia, but New Jersey's strident laws also restrained casinos' growth, in turn slowing the resort's recovery.

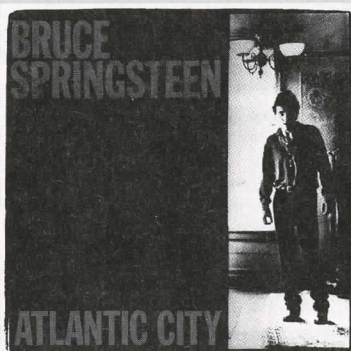
But there is still that line and too many people find themselves on the wrong side of it, waiting, dreaming, fantasizing for the sand to turn into gold. The latest racket boys appear to be some of America's newest immigrants: Russian strongmen who lock themselves behind walls of bulletproof glass in tiny shops with signs outside that scream in lights, "CASH FOR GOLD." They wait for desperate gamblers willing to finance one more chance by selling their jewelry at pennies on the dollar.

In late August, 1998, one of these shopkeepers opened the security door of his store and invited a visitor inside. He must have known his guest, for to allow entry into such an inner sanctum is a sign ultimate trust.

Twenty hours later police found the body. The bullet fired into the mouth, a Russian culture expert said later, signaled the man talked too much. The one through his heart indicated he had betrayed someone. The coup de grace was a bullet that ripped open his stomach, spilling numerous organs on the floor, a sign his killer believed the man had become too greedy for his own good.

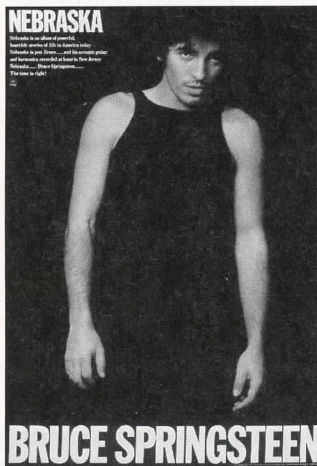
As far as anyone knows, the dead Russian had no nickname.

—Thomas Peele covers *Atlantic City* for The Press of Atlantic City.



this album.... There was a joke going around about the album. It didn't take long for the record company to get a cease-and-desist order out to me in the form of a telegram. And when I was opening up the telegram, we joked that it was actually going to say, 'Please keep playing the album. You're our only hope!'

Bruce is still spending many nights jamming, and the regular Sunday night shows at the Pony with Cats have gotten longer and longer: eight songs on July 25; six on August 1; eight on August 8; seven songs including a long "Detroit Medley" on August 15. By September 19, the set with Cats is at 12 songs.



## October - December

On October 3, Bruce's final set of the "summer" is an unprecedented 14 songs with Cats, including the debut of "Open All Night."

The next day, October 4, *Nebraska* is released. Listeners clearly have their work cut out for them, as this album sounds nothing like its contemporaries, whether it's the starkness of its sound or of its ideology: Jay Cocks writes in *Time*, "*Nebraska*, an acoustic bypass through the American heartland, sounds a little like a Library of Congress field recording made out behind some shutdown auto plant"; Greil Marcus describes the album as "the most complete and probably the most convincing statement of resistance and refusal that Ronald Reagan's U.S.A. has yet elicited from any artist or politician." Robert Palmer, in the *New York Times*, calls *Nebraska* Springsteen's "most personal record, and his most disturbing.... It's been a long time since a mainstream rock star made an album that asks such tough questions and refuses to settle for easy answers—let alone an album suggesting that perhaps there are no answers...."

The album receives high praise from critics practically across the board, both despite and because of its blatant uncommerciality. Steve Pond



reviews it for *Rolling Stone*: "Flying in the face of a sagging record industry with an intensely personal project that could easily alienate radio, rock's gutsiest mainstream performer has dramatically reclaimed the right to make the records he wants to make, and damn the consequences. This is the bravest of Springsteen's six records; it's also his most startling, direct and chilling...."

No one, not even the critics who lauded *Nebraska*, seemed optimistic about the depressing record's performance. But as J.D. Considine writes, "a funny thing happened when the album finally came out—the fans loved it." Though not a chartbuster, *Nebraska* is played on 169 FM stations across the country, making it the most added AOR album nationwide. It's the top debut on the AOR airplay chart at #23 and enters Top 40 at #29. The album may not be a commercial success in the traditional sense, but it does rise above dim expectations and what seemed considerable odds. Considine writes: "By releasing an album as uncompromisingly honest as *Nebraska*, Bruce Springsteen has shown himself to be an artist of considerable depth. But in taking to such an album so quickly, his fans have demonstrated that rock 'n' roll itself is capable of nourishing such depth, and is not simply an escapist entertainment. And there's nothing remotely depressing about that."

The album attains popularity in the US without the benefit of a single, though other countries will get "Atlantic City" b/w "Mansion on the Hill" and "Open All Night" b/w "The Big Payback." What the US does get, the week after *Nebraska's*



FEATURING (MEET THE) FLINTSTONES

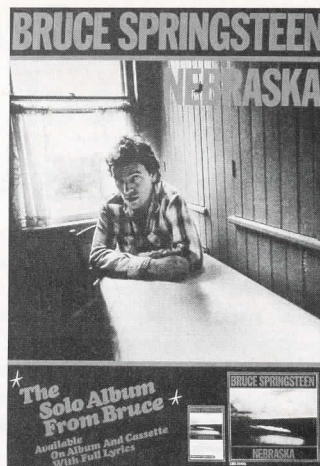
release, is the Bruce Springsteen single, *Live at Bedrock*. Featuring "Meet the Flintstones" b/w "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," the seven-inch nails the E Street sound. Ken Tucker writes, "This single is a perfect parody." Clarence tells J. D. Considine, "I thought it was funny as hell. The guy sounds like Bruce. 'Course, I only listened to it once; if I listen to it again, it may not be so funny."

In October, shortly after the release of the new album, Bruce hits the road and drives west to California. He is still dealing with isolation, but he is at least admittedly happy with the record by several accounts, feeling it's his best writing to date. So when he gets to L.A., where he has improved the home studio in his garage with help from Toby Scott, he continues in a similar vein. He's supposed to be concentrating on mixing the rock material with Plotkin, but as Landau later tells *Rolling Stone*, Bruce "spent a good deal of time after the release of *Nebraska* feeling very close to that album. I don't think he was ready to suddenly switch back...." Springsteen tells Marsh, "Whenever you start another record, you start from the point you stopped at. And

when I stopped the *Nebraska* album, I just continued in my garage in Los Angeles." Working by himself over the fall, Bruce uses a Linn drum machine and records demos of songs like "Shut Out the Light," "Johnny Bye Bye," "Sugarland" and "Follow That Dream."

On November 27, Springsteen takes the stage in L.A. for a jam with Jimmy and the Mustangs at Club Lingerie, and he soon has friends in town: he joins Clarence for two songs in Palo Alto on December 3, and goes to see Steve play the Roxy the following week. Steve's first solo album is out this month. *Men Without Women* is released under the name of Little Steven, and though he will not officially leave the E Street Band for over a year, Steve tells *Backstreets*: "My central focus and my first priority is my own work now.... Once you start playing your own music it becomes a big part of you. It's all encompassing and your focus is changed. And this is not something new for me: It's been coming for a while." And the name change reflects it: "Miami has retired, really. It's just Little Steven now.... Yeah, he's gone pretty much, retired to a condo in Tampa."

The video for Atlantic City has its world premiere on MTV on December 22, a black and white video of the city from inside a moving car that does not include Springsteen. The video is directed by the head of Sony Music's creative services, Arnold Levine, who also shot the "Rosalita" performance clip in Ari-



zona. Bruce tells Chet Flippo that for his first conceptual video, "the only direction I gave was to say that it should be kind of gritty looking and it should have no images that matched up to images in the song."

By the holiday season Bruce is back in Jersey, and on December 31 is the best man at the New York wedding of Steve Van Zandt and Maureen Santoro. Also on hand are the E Streeters—who have gone all year without an official gig—Southside Johnny, Gary US Bonds, and the Jukes. Services are performed by the Reverend Richard Penniman (A.K.A. Little Richard), and Percy Sledge sings "When a Man Loves a Woman" as the couple walks down the aisle. Bruce and others join the Chambers Brothers in a jam at the reception, and Bonds counts down to 1983.

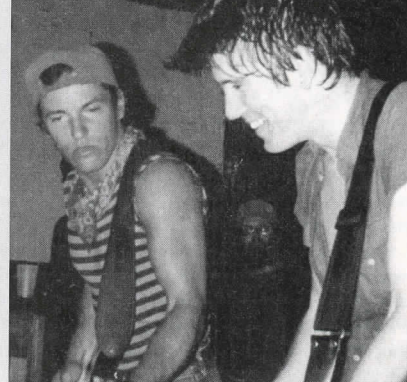
**JOHN EDDIE** One of the Jersey Shore's most popular rock acts who got his start in 1982, playing Big Man's West in Red Bank:

The first time Bruce got up and played with us was a Sunday night at Big Man's. We had these flyers when we started, saying we were playing there. The first time we played, there were, like, nine people there. So then we made a flyer: "Nine screaming fans can't be wrong." The next time was the first time Bruce played with us, and it was "43 screaming fans." Then the next flyer was "300 screaming fans can't be wrong."

I was ten years younger, so every time Bruce would come onstage, he'd call out songs that weren't a part of my youth. I learned a lot of classic songs that way. He'd call out 'Carol' by Chuck Berry, and he'd basically teach it to us, and we'd play. He'd call out "Boom Boom." [Springsteen's first performance of the song, on 1/14/84.] Now I never did that song and didn't know it, but all of a sudden we'd be playing it. He has that power to get what he wants out of a situation. He took a bunch of mediocre guys and made us feel confident.

—Interview by Robert Makin

**Springsteen and John Eddie, 8/19/83**



HOLLY CARA PHOTO

**BOBBY BANDIERA** Asbury Jukes guitarist and leader of the Bobby Bandiera Band. As vocalist/guitarist of *Cats on a Smooth Surface*, Bobby played many Sundays with Springsteen at the Stone Pony during the summer of 1982. Cats also included Glen Burtnick, Ray Andersen and Fran Smith, all of whom also found success in the music business. A couple of years later, Bandiera was one of Springsteen's top choices to fill Steve Van Zandt's open space in the E Street Band:

It was always kind of a surprise. Nobody really knew if he'd show up. We'd talk afterwards, and I'd ask him if he thought he'd come back next week. He'd say, 'Man, that was great.' It was so much fun for him to come out without the pressures of the record industry and keeping a band going on the road. He could have done that any way he wanted to. He was as big as life, but he came down to his own backyard. He happened to like the band, so it was something he chose to do more often than not.

We felt fortunate and had a great time playing with him. It was a magical thing. You want to try to associate with guys who can make magic happen more often than not. You don't always find that. But it was always fun for him and for us. All of us were working musicians in Cats. Nobody did anything else for a living. With so many downfalls and sidesteps to make it from point A to point B to point Z, it can be very disheartening. So to finally get to play with somebody in the thick of being successful just made it more clear that it was obtainable. He was just like us, we were just like him. "I think I'll keep doing this" was the attitude everybody had after playing with Bruce.

—Interview by Robert Makin



# Miami Steve: From E Street to Checkpoint Charlie

BY MIKE SAUNDERS

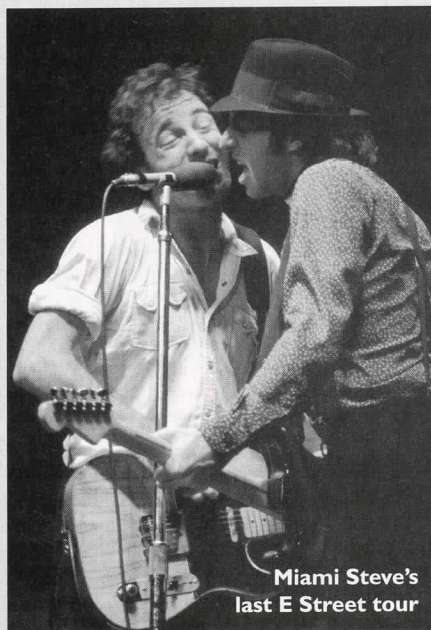
**B**he year-long River tour finally came to an end in Cincinnati on September 14, 1981. Although nobody knew it at the time, this show marked Miami Steve Van Zandt's final live performance as a member of the E Street Band. Since his debut in July 1975, Steve had played over 400 concerts with Bruce. He had also provided production assistance during the *Darkness on the Edge of Town* sessions and was later credited as a full-time co-producer on *The River*. His influence, both onstage and off, as band member, friend, confidante and musical collaborator, was undeniable. "With Bruce out front, I started to work the band, that's a rhythm guitarist's function," he explained in 1984, with characteristic understatement. "Me and Max and Garry would lock up into a groove so Bruce wouldn't have to think about it." On his contribution to the development of Bruce's music, he was equally humble. "I joined as a guitar player, but right away I started arranging, and the fifteen-minute 'Jungleland'-style things turned into 'Badlands.' Partly because that's what Bruce wanted to do, and partly because I hear things in terms of three and four-minute singles."

In addition to his work with Bruce and the E Street Band, Steve also acted as mentor to Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes, playing with the band whenever possible between his Springsteen commitments. He also arranged, produced and wrote most of the original material for their first three albums, *I Don't Want to Go Home*, *This Time It's for Real* and *Hearts of Stone*, using the monikers Miami Steve, Sugar Miami Steve and Stevie Van Zandt. When his professional relationship with Southside and company ended in 1978, he lost his main creative outlet. Although he began to formulate ideas for a solo project soon afterwards, work on the *River* album and tour (plus the co-production of Gary US Bonds' *Dedication* album) had kept Steve fully occupied for the following two-and-a-half years. Only when approached by representatives of EMI-America in the summer of 1981 did he begin to seriously consider the prospect of making a solo album. "I really felt they knew me and understood my work," he said in 1982. "If they hadn't come to me and asked, I probably would have put it off forever."

In the fall, with Bruce at home in New Jersey writing the *Nebraska* material, Steve assembled a one-off band (comprising musicians from both the E Street Band and the Asbury Jukes) to record a bunch of new songs. "He just wanted to rehearse, get the songs ready, go in and just cut them live in the studio," recalled Max Weinberg shortly afterwards. "We rehearsed ten to twelve hours a day. It was like being in a garage band." Among the songs recorded at these sessions was "Men Without Women," which became the album's title track and was both inspired by and named after a book of short stories by Ernest Hemingway. "It was a book of boxers and bullfighters and soldiers," Steve told *Rolling Stone* magazine, "but it coulda

had a chapter about a rock and roll band."

Before completing work on his own record, Steve co-produced a second Gary US Bonds comeback album, *On the Line*, in early 1982, then rejoined Bruce and the E Streeters in the spring for a series of recording sessions which produced the majority of the songs eventually released on *Born in the USA* two years later. In the summer, while Bruce prepared his home demo tape for official release, Steve put together his own perma-



Miami Steve's last E Street tour

nent touring band, which included ex-Young Rascal Dino Danelli on drums, Jean Bouvoir from the Plasmatics on bass and the entire Asbury Jukes horn section. Partly to distance himself from any Springsteen comparisons and partly as a tribute to his early R&B and blues influences Little Richard and Little Walter, Miami Steve became Little Steven. Having accepted the Van Zandt philosophy that "rock and roll is motivation, not entertainment" and agreed to abide by a strict set of rules which stipulated "no drugs, no alcohol, no lasting diversion," his new band became the Disciples of Soul. "Soul for me is taking on another definition," Steve said at the time. "What it means for me now is an emotional commitment to something. That's what the band means—people who are emotionally committed to their work."

Little Steven and the Disciples of Soul made their live debut at the Peppermint Lounge in New York on July 18, 1982 and began touring later in the year, with appearances at Radio City Music Hall in New York, the Roxy in Los Angeles, Big Man's West in Red Bank and the Marquee Club in London. The band's exhilarating horn-drenched blend of rock and soul picked up where *Hearts of Stone* had left off, while the set lists included most of the *Men Without Women* album, several Asbury

Jukes classics and a handful of covers, including Marvin Gaye's "Can I Get a Witness" and Otis Redding's "Respect." The album was released in October, a few weeks after *Nebraska*. "Men Without Women was a New York song cycle about hard life on the city streets," recalled Jay Cocks in *Time* magazine five years later. "The songs were fervent and the Disciples of Soul blasted behind Van Zandt like a garage band concertizing on top of a pizza oven." Another short series of US dates and a five-week tour of Europe followed in the first half of 1983.

This new beginning for Miami Steve/Little Steven was actually a false start. Shortly after the band's appearance at the US Festival in San Bernardino on May 30, 1983 he ditched the horn section, the soul influences and the Jukes songs. Adopting a more direct approach both lyrically and musically, he then wrote and recorded the *Voice of America* album. The new material ("Justice," "Solidarity," "Los Desaparecidos," "I Am A Patriot") reflected a growing political awareness, sparked off by his eye-opening experiences in Europe on the *River* tour (he once described passing through Berlin's Checkpoint Charlie as "one of the most intense experiences of my life") and his subsequent investigations into US foreign policy. "To me, the story of this record is in some ways the story of my life," he told *Musician* magazine in 1984. "I felt the clouds sort of open up and I knew exactly what I wanted to do, how I wanted to do it and who I was. I think on the first record I explored who I was, you can feel the struggle. Now I really think I'm doing something nobody else is doing. I wasn't sure I was ever gonna find that." The truncated version of the Disciples of Soul previewed several of the new songs on a brief European tour in August 1983, although the album wasn't released until the following year.

For most of 1982 and 1983, Bruce had been comparatively inactive, leaving Steve free to tour and record with his own band, missing only a handful of sessions in the process. Although his solo career now took priority, Steve had often indicated that he would continue to work with Bruce in the future if their schedules didn't clash, but this plan inevitably proved unworkable. In the spring of 1984, with *Born in the USA*, *Voice of America* and their associated international tours ready to roll, Little Steven's departure from the Springsteen camp was officially announced, bringing to an end the E Street Band's greatest era.

**LITTLE STEVEN**  
AND THE  
**DISCIPLES OF SOUL**

This certifies that I, \_\_\_\_\_  
am a Disciple of Soul.

LAWRENCE KIRSCH PHOTO

EMI

May 29, 1984

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: LITTLE STEVEN LEAVES E STREET BAND

Little Steven (Van Zandt) has officially announced his departure from Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band in order to devote his full attention to his solo career. The split was amicable and Van Zandt and Springsteen remain the best of friends.

Steven's new album "Voice of America," written during these trips to Europe last year, was released in mid-May. He also co-produced and performed on Springsteen's upcoming LP, "Born in the USA."

Beginning in July, Little Steven will tour the US with his band, The Disciples of Soul. In June August he will tour off his European tour with an unprecedented second appearance on the German television show "Rockpalast."

For further information please contact Susan Clary at (212) 463-5143.



# 1983

## January - April

*Nebraska* is one of the most critically acclaimed albums of 1982, and it has performed surprisingly well commercially—for a record with little airplay and no supporting tour. In the *Rolling Stone* year-end poll, critics and readers agree on *Nebraska* as album of the year. Readers also pick Springsteen as best male vocalist, songwriter and artist of the year.

When *Nebraska* was released in the fall, Columbia's promo material had announced: "There are no plans for touring as Bruce and the E Street Band are in the studio wrapping up a new album for an early 1983 release." But Springsteen is still entrenched in writing and recording new material. With Clarence's club shutting down, he shows up to play the final night at Big Man's West on January 8 with Max, Garry and the Big Man himself. He soon returns to California to continue his demo work while fans wonder when to expect a new record. At one point the rock record had been expected on January 15, to be followed by a tour in February. In a radio interview in late January, Van Zandt says fans would be "very lucky to see the album by summer."

Springsteen is having a very productive and prolific early 1983. With guitar, keyboard and drum machine at his Hollywood Hills garage studio, Springsteen records a slew of songs with titles like "The Klansman," "County Fair," and another new one called "Your Hometown." Bruce briefly flies east in February to record the evolved "My Hometown" with the E Streeters at the Hit Factory, where the rest of the recording for the seventh album will take place, but he essentially stays in L.A. for the first four months of the year. Finally, by late April, he decides that it's time to get everyone back together. As he put it to Marsh—whose *Glory Days* provides much of what is known about this period—"Summer was coming up, I'd been in California a while. It seemed like it's time to get back, get in the studio, do it the old way. Get the band in, spend a little time there. And that's what we did."

## May - August

The E Street Band reconvenes in the studio, and the May 12 *Rolling Stone* reports that Bruce's "forthcoming album with the E Street Band... may make it into stores before the summer's end." The work-in-progress, which rumor soon has it will be called *Born in the USA*, is in reality still more than a year away

from release. For the first time in eight years, the band is recording without Steve in the studio. Van Zandt has been touring Europe with his Disciples of Soul, winding up at Cannes for the premiere of his *Men Without Women* movie on May 13. One third of the songs that make it to Bruce's next album will have been recorded without him.

By this summer, *Nebraska* has gone platinum. Johnny Cash covers "Johnny 99" and "Highway Patrolman" on his new album called *Johnny 99. Born to Run* is issued on CD, though the cheapest CD players retail for around \$1000. Two movies incorporate

ence disc. Word gets out that the album is in the mixing stage, but this is essentially just a much-needed pit stop. After spending time under the hood, it is Plotkin's honest response—his impression of what they do and do not yet have, and most importantly his emphasis on "Born in the USA" and "My Hometown"—is a turning point. Two nights later Bruce brings in a new song to record, one called "Bobby Jean." When, toward late August, the record is still not coming together, Landau takes matters into hand and submits his proposal for the new record. He pushes for long-over-

spokesperson cautions that the Jerseyite could decide to do even more recording...." *Backstreets* reports that Madame Marie herself has predicted a new album release by Christmas.

Springsteen gets back to work in September, now considering and working on songs that had been abandoned. He and Plotkin have rented rooms at the Lyden House, a residential hotel on New York's East 53rd St. Much of the fall is spent sifting through material, selecting songs and experimenting with the order. For the first time, Springsteen takes a poll, asking band members, crew and friends to choose favorite songs. He sits them down at a table with the lyrics, playing the tracks on a walkman and writing down the responses in a notebook.

Springsteen spends his birthday, September 23, playing softball with the E Street Band versus the Stone Pony team. October 15 brings the release of Clarence and the Red Bank Rockers' first album, *Rescue*. Springsteen has contributed two songs, "Savin' Up" and the instrumental b-side, "Summer on Signal Hill." Clarence's video for "Woman's Got the Power" features Bruce playing a car wash attendant—his MTV and acting debut.

On November 6 Bruce plays his last club jam of the year, joining Cats at the Stone Pony. The E Street Band is back in the studio this month, working on material that includes "Murder Incorporated"—which will become a rumored album title—and the new "No Surrender."

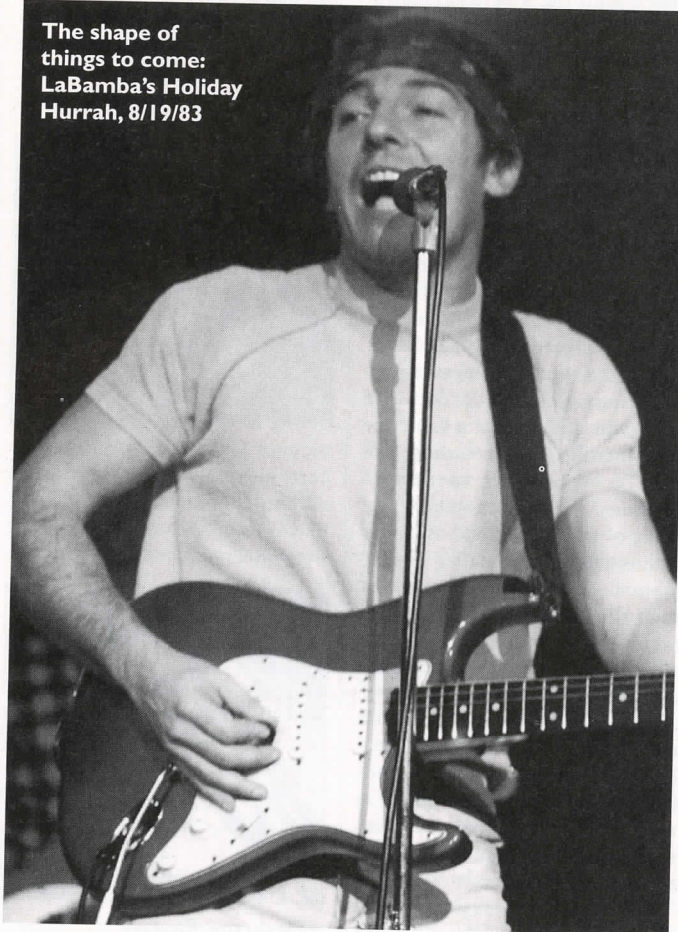
"La Bamba's Holiday Hurrah" is held on December 28 at the Monmouth Arts Center in Red Bank, where Springsteen joins Nils Lofgren and Shore musicians for "From Small Things," "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" and "Twist and Shout." Though he goes to the Pony on December 31, the Red Bank show is his last performance of 1983. On New Year's Eve, Bruce is content to watch as Beaver Brown and John Eddie rock the Pony, and he hosts an after-hours party at his house as the sun rises on 1984.

Madame Marie's prediction may not have come true, but at least by the end of the year Springsteen and the E Street Band have more than a dozen songs for serious consideration and ready for mixing with Bob Clearmountain. The seventh album, though still months from completion, is shaping up at last. Reviewing Bruce's most recent album, Robert Santelli had written, "In a word, *Nebraska* is a masterpiece. And after listening to it a few dozen times, I've got to wonder what could Springsteen ever do for an encore." In the New Year, the world will find out.

—Christopher Phillips

Next issue: *Born in the U.S.A.*

The shape of things to come: LaBamba's Holiday Hurrah, 8/19/83



Springsteen's music for the first time: *Risky Business* uses a snippet of "Hungry Heart," but John Sayles' *Baby It's You* uses Bruce's songs extensively. Sayles will direct videos for Bruce's next album.

Recording continues without a break into July. Though Bruce performs several times this summer, he is clearly focused on completing the record. Perhaps too focused: with August approaching, Springsteen prematurely proposes they move to the final mixing stage. Though he does not yet seem to have a thematically unified album on his hands, he proposes a track listing to Plotkin, who takes five days with Toby Scott at the Hit Station to create a refer-

looked songs from the May 1982 E Street sessions, including "I'm Goin' Down," "I'm on Fire" and "Cover Me," which at last are back in consideration after a year off the radar. With a newfound sense of direction and promise, the group finally takes a late summer vacation.

## September - December

The September 1 issue of *Rolling Stone* reports, "Don't bet the rent on it, but Bruce Springsteen may have turned the corner on his next LP.... It could mean that the long-awaited album will be finished by late fall and that Springsteen will hit the road before the year's end—but a

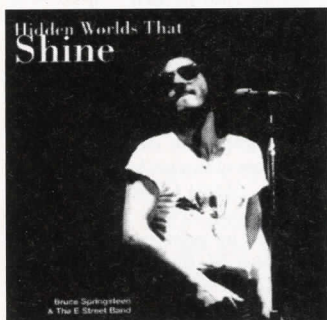


# ON COLLECT I N G

By Richard Breton

For the benefit of our readers, *Backstreets* magazine provides ratings of unauthorized releases currently in circulation. Don't write us asking where these can be obtained. *Backstreets* in no manner, shape, or form endorses these recordings. These reviews are provided by our columnists solely for informational purposes. Despite these words of warning, some collectors will still seek this material out, and for those collectors, our reviews should help you steer clear of the real losers.

Unauthorized CDs are growing in numbers and with that growth, expect some real rip-offs—our advice is let the buyer beware, and demand to listen to material before you buy it. Each title here has been rated for packaging, performance, and sound quality on a scale from one to ten, one being awful, and ten being quality generally found on legitimate releases.



## •Hidden Worlds That Shine

(E. St., 2CD)

Sound: 7

Packaging: 8

Performance: 9

*Hidden Worlds That Shine* brings to disc an audience tape of the April 4, 1976 show at Michigan State University Auditorium, East Lansing, Michigan—an early stop on the "Chicken Scratch" tour. The setlists for many of the shows on the spring leg of this tour are unknown—which makes any definitive statements difficult—but this show has been a legendary standout (and a trivia quiz answer) for a couple of reasons. To the best of current knowledge, this show marked the debut of "Frankie"

and is also the only known show in Springsteen's performing history to include every song from the previous year's *Born to Run*. Trivia aside, it's still a great show.

Opening with "Night" followed by "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out," two of the *Born to Run* songs are quickly out of the way. "It's My Life" follows "Spirit In The Night," and then three more *Born to Run* songs: "Thunder Road," which now includes the longer piano introduction that will become the arrangement of choice until the *River* tour; "She's the One," in its shorter 1975 arrangement with the harmonica intro; and one of the better performances of "Born to Run" to be committed to disc.

A definite highlight of this set is "Frankie" which, if this is indeed the debut, seems to have hatched fully grown. From what is currently known, "Frankie" was only performed a handful of times during April 1976, and has not been played live since. Superior to the studio outtakes of this song supposedly recorded at a later date, and featuring Clarence prominently for the ending, the live '76 versions are considered by many the definitive arrangement of this song. And this version is every bit as good a performance—quite possibly better overall—than the more commonly bootlegged April 7, 1976 version from a soundboard. Truly phenomenal.

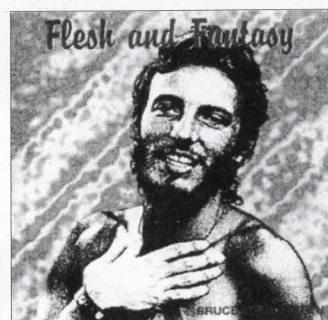
Next up is a great live version of "Meeting Across The River," but it's too bad the audience hadn't been a bit more quiet—I'm reminded about how audiences reacted to the quieter *Nebraska* tunes on the *Born in the USA* tour. This is followed by a fine, if short, "Backstreets." After a quick "Growin' Up" and a great "Saint in the City" comes the last song from *Born to Run* to complete the set, which is, appropriately, "Jungleland."

In the encores, this version of "Rosalita" is a nice treat, with a great guitar and castanets intro, and the crowd really gets into it. "Quarter To Three" closes out the show.

This is a fine sounding audience tape, one of the better ones from this era. Some may have a problem with the sound as there is some distortion from the PA system on the louder songs. The taper may have set his levels a

little too hot, which seems to have added to the distortion problem. I've compared this to what I had always considered a great tape of this show, discovering that the distortion was always there, and my tape wasn't as crisp sounding as the one used for the CD. I was surprised by the improvements on the E. St. set, especially in the low-end and the drums. There's an ambience and clarity on this CD that allows one to overhear conversations and pick out where some of the more vocal members of the audience are sitting relative to the taper. And there's no tape hiss to speak of at all.

This is the first installment in E St.'s new "Historic Performances" series, and it's a fine beginning. The three bonus tracks, all from 1976, include "Incident on 57th Street" from Penn State University on April 13, as well as "Something in the Night" and "The Promise" from the Palladium in New York City on November 2, 1976. Unfortunately, the sound isn't as good on these as the rest of the set. Packaging includes pictures taken at the April 4 concert, and marvelous liner notes recount personal reminiscences of someone who attended the show. Recommended.



## •Flesh and Fantasy

(Doberman, 2CD-R)

Sound: 6

Packaging: 5

Performance: 10

Around the end of the summer of 1974, both David Sancious and Ernest "Boom" Carter left the E Street band, leaving Springsteen short a keyboardist and a drummer. After quickly selecting their replacements (Roy Bittan on piano and Max Weinberg on drums) and adding Suki Lahav on violin, the new E Street Band was back on the road in about a month for a number of shows from September to December. While a couple of tracks from

this time period have popped up on compilation CDs in the past, a full show from this three-month fall tour has never been released on compact disc until now.

*Flesh and Fantasy* is taken from an audience tape of the October 29, 1974 show at the Boston Music Hall in Boston, MA. At this point Roy, Max and Suki have only been playing live with Bruce for nearly six weeks, and it's a testament to their abilities that they have fit into the band so quickly and so well.

Bruce opens the show with "Incident on 57th Street," adding only Suki on violin and background vocals. The rest of the band comes out and breaks into "Spirit in the Night" followed by "Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street?" "The E Street Shuffle" is the slow version, having abandoned the fast version played previously that year, and is followed by a great full-band cover of "Cupid."

Compared to the live version with David Sancious in the band, "Jungleland" has undergone the most radical of transformations. Gone is the jazzy middle section which clashed with the rest of the song, and in its place is a fine guitar-and-violin duel between Bruce and Suki. The lyrics are tighter, but it's still a work-in-progress. "She's the One," which debuted during this fall tour, is also an early version, with traces of lyrics that will make their way into other songs. It's amazing that Roy had managed to duplicate David Sancious' feel for both "Kitty's Back" and "New York City Serenade" and still make them his own. And Suki's contribution to "New York City Serenade" was always a treat. After "Rosalita" and "Sandy," the final song of the night is "A Love So Fine."

Bruce had a strong fan following in Boston by this time, having already played in the area several times that year. And on this night the Boston crowd was especially feisty. There are some great moments when both Bruce and the audience are reacting to each other—one such moment during "The E Street Shuffle" is a particular classic, and it is these moments that make this release such a fun listen.

The packaging is minimal on this CD-R, although the picture



discs are a nice touch. The sound is fine, about as good as expected for an audience tape of a 1974 show, although there are some edits where a tape side ran out and a few points where the taper obviously changes the recording levels during the show. I wish Doberman had access to some proper mastering software—the ability to minimize the tape hiss, balance the sound and provide smoother edits is sorely missed at times. But the performance is nothing short of fantastic, and all things considered, *Flesh and Fantasy* does a fine job representing the fall 1974 tour.

#### •Before the Flood

(CU Records, 2CD-R)

Sound: 5/9

Packaging: 4

Performance: 8-10

As *Flesh and Fantasy* is the first real representative of the fall 1974 shows, *Before the Flood* is the first to offer a complete show from a year earlier.

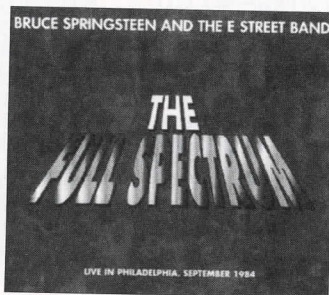
The bulk of this set is taken from a decent audience tape of the October 31, 1973 show at The Main Point in Bryn Mawr, PA. Highlights include "Walkin' the Dog," "Lost in the Flood," "Zero and Blind Terry" and "Blinded By the Light." A real treat is the fast version of "The E Street Shuffle" which, along with Clarence, includes roadie Al Tellone on baritone sax and duplicates almost perfectly the album version of the song.

The sound of this set is another matter. While the quieter songs at the beginning sound fine, the sound levels are lowered too much once the louder songs start. This presumably originates with the source tape, and it compounds the problem of tape hiss—there's too much hiss here for my liking. While it's nice to have a show from this time period, I was still hoping for better overall sound.

Much better are the bonus tracks which make up most of the second disc. These are taken from the soundboard tape of the March 2, 1973 show at the Berkeley Community Theater in Berkeley, CA. As with the circulating tapes of this show, the beginning of the first song ("Lost in the Flood") is missing, but it's still the best live version of this song I've heard. This tape was previously used for bonus tracks

to one of the *Prodigal Son* sets, and I would assume that set provided the master for this release. It hardly matters, since this superb sounding tape contains early performances that truly deserve to be heard.

It's rare when the bonus tracks outshine the rest of the release—they did with the *Prodigal Son* release, and they do here as well. If you don't have that version of *Prodigal Son*, you'd do well to get this set just for the Berkeley portion. In addition you'd also get a good show and fine performances from an era not commonly bootleg—think of the Main Point show as the bonus tracks and you can't go wrong.



#### •The Full Spectrum

(Doberman 4CD-R)

Sound: 7

Packaging: 7

Performance: 10

In the middle of the first leg of the *Born in the USA* tour, Bruce and the band played a six-night stand at the Spectrum in Philadelphia. Like the New Jersey series the previous month, the Philly stand featured the sort of performances that made this part of the tour a favorite of many and produced the classic live LP bootleg, *This Gun's For Hire*, from the September 18, 1984 show. In the world of traders, there aren't many who don't have at least one copy of this show in one form or another (I count three myself). Ignoring the rather poorly executed *The Sounds of Philadelphia* CD—which, to add insult to injury, was taken from a poor-sounding vinyl copy of *This Gun's For Hire*—not one of the Philly shows has been properly transferred to CD.

Doberman corrects this gaffe with one of the most ambitious Bruce projects to have been released in quite some time. *The Full Spectrum* not only chronicles one complete Philly show (in this case, the September 14 show) on three CDs, but adds a

fourth bonus CD containing all the different songs that were played on the other five nights.

The September 14 show featured the less common "Open All Night" and "My Father's House" during the first set. Other highlights include "Prove It All Night" and "Darlington County." "Point Blank" was played for only the second time on this tour. The second set's "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out" features the Miami Horns, who also return for much of the final encore.

Sound-wise, you can hear some faint tape hiss during the quieter portions of the show, and there is a weird source change at one point. The second source sounds just as good, but it's noticeably different. There are also some clipped songs, presumably when tapes got flipped, but overall it's at least as good as the best of the circulating tapes from any night of this Philly stand. While I still prefer the overall performance from the September 18 show slightly over this one, it's only a matter of personal taste: this show offers equally fine performances of many of the same tunes.

The packaging is the finest that Doberman has produced. Which isn't saying *that* much—there's still no booklet to speak of—but the color front and back covers, as well as the color picture discs, are most attractive. The only indication that this is a CD-R is the playing side of the disc. The fourth disc of bonus tracks presented a problem, pointing out the risks with CD-R releases. While others I've contacted have had no problems, my disc four just would not play on any CD player. After trying two home units and three CD-ROM drives, I've given up.

For now, I can wholeheartedly recommend this as a three-disc set, as it does essentially contain the September 14th show in its entirety (the first 15 seconds or so of the clipped "Badlands" and "Rosalita" notwithstanding). Unfortunately, I can't truly recommend this as a four-disc set—and without the bonus tracks, this isn't really the *Full Spectrum*. As recommended with all CD-Rs in particular, if you get a chance to listen to it before you buy, by all means do so. As it stands now I have a great three-disc set and a nice looking coaster. ➡

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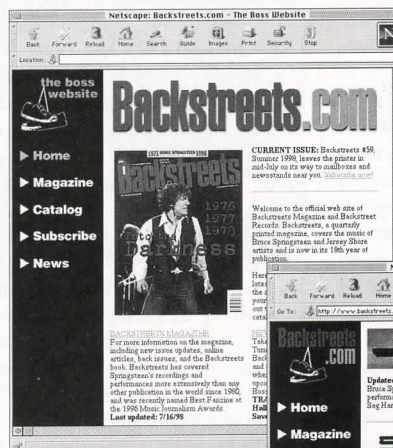
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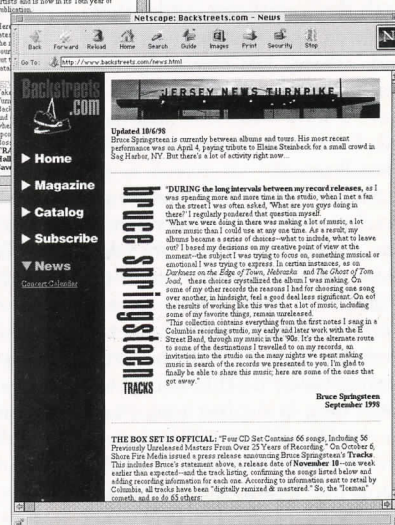


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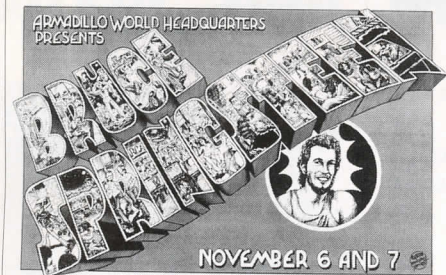
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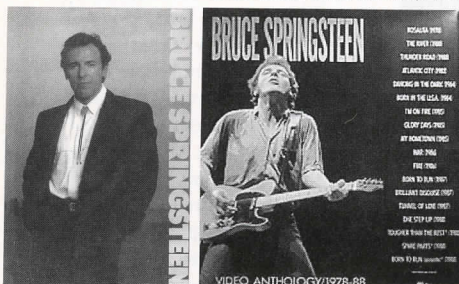


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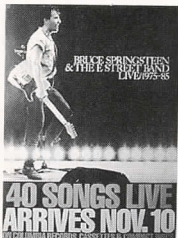
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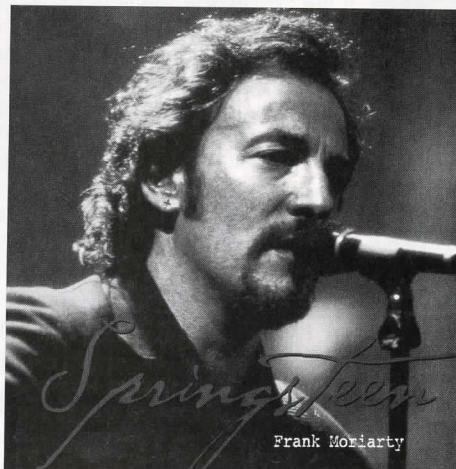
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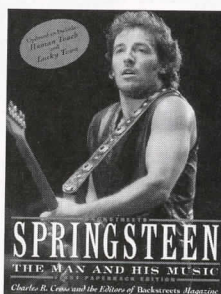


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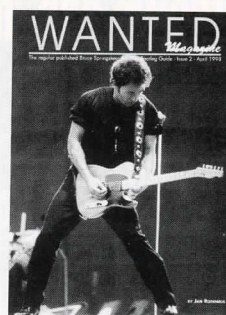


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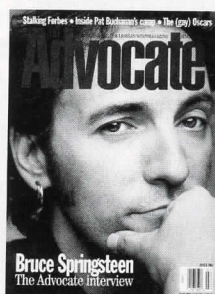
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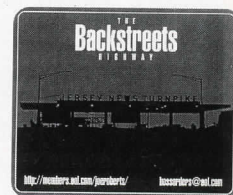


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**Scott M. Steuck**  
Wautoma, WI

On September 2, Davide Ferretti, my friend and fellow Bruce fan, died in a motorcycle accident. Davide was very popular among Springsteen fans in northern Italy and other parts of Europe as well. Aged 29, he had been a diehard fan of Bruce since he was a teenager. In the summer of '94 he accomplished his dream and met Bruce, outside of Marz in New Jersey, where Bruce would perform with Joe Crushecky that night. Some of the pictures seen around from that show were shot by Davide. After a long time out of touch, I met him again two years ago because of our passion for Bruce, and we became good friends, traveling to see the shows as well as going out on Friday nights. I found out many of my friends were diehard Bruce fans after our friendships already started. With Davide it was vice versa. No matter the order, I think Bruce's message bound us together somehow. As I am writing now, Davide is lying in his grave with Bruce's flag on his left side, and on his right is *Another Side of Bruce Springsteen*, the album he'd taken along in the summer for his last vacation. "I'll keep movin' through the dark with you in my heart..."

**Giorgio Malucelli**  
Bologna, Italy

[illegible]



# River Tour Backstage Passes



**River generic**  
B&W cover shot,  
with River-style  
type. \$10



**Montreal, 1/23/81**  
River cover shot  
in black, "Tour  
'81." ASO. \$15



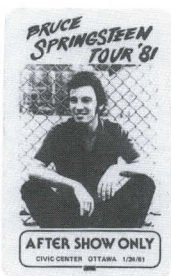
**Memphis, TN,  
2/25/81**

Brown on white,  
All Areas. \$25

**Memphis, TN,  
2/25/81** White type  
on blue. ASO. \$25



**Toronto, 1/21/81**  
Cadillac Ranch  
drawing in red.  
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**Ottawa, 1/24/81**  
Oversize fence  
style in red, ASO.  
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**Kansas City,  
2/5/81** "goin' to..."  
type as above, but  
in black on white,  
ASO. \$25



**Washington D.C.,  
8/4/81** Brown type  
& stripes.  
ASO. \$20



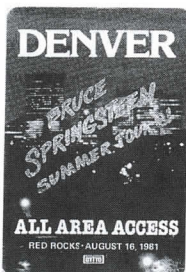
**Edinburgh,  
3/30/81** Cool type,  
blue on black.  
ASO. \$20



**Denver, CO  
8/16/81.** Blue cow-  
boy boot on light  
red ground, gold  
foil stamp. Guest  
pass. \$25

All passes are unused (with  
backing still on), original  
passes manufactured by Otto  
and Son for individual shows  
on the 1980-81 River tour.

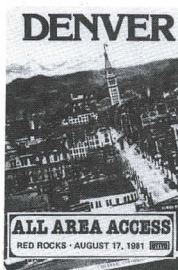
ASO=After Show Only



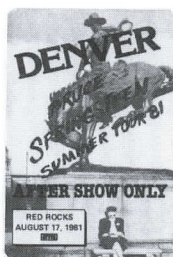
**Denver, CO,  
8/16/81**  
B&W shot of city,  
gold foil stamp.  
All Areas. \$25



**Denver, CO,  
8/16/81** Cowgirls:  
orange & brown  
on white with gold  
foil. ASO. \$20



**Denver, CO  
8/17/81.** Red type  
& shot of old city,  
gold foil stamp.  
\$25



**Denver, CO  
8/17/81.** Sepia  
photo of woman  
on bench below  
bronco statue,  
orange type, gold  
foil stamp. ASO.  
\$25



**Los Angeles,  
8/23/81** Orange &  
pink stars on  
black, gold foil  
stamp. ASO. \$20

**Los Angeles,  
8/23/81** Blue &  
green stars, gold  
foil stamp. All  
Areas. \$25



**Los Angeles,  
8/24/81** orange  
Chinese Theater  
on white with gold  
foil stamp. ASO.  
\$35



**Los Angeles,  
8/27/81** Brown  
Derby in dark grey,  
ASO. \$30



**Cincinnati, OH  
9/13/81** Red  
"Paradise." All  
Areas. \$30



**Cincinnati, OH  
9/14/81** Coliseum  
photo in green,  
last show of tour.  
ASO. \$35

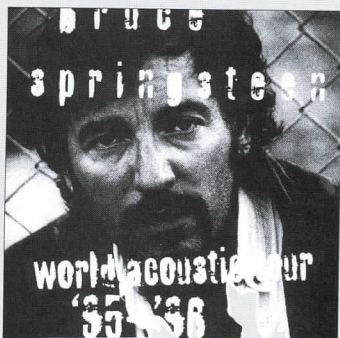


**Cincinnati, OH,  
9/14/81** Crew  
group shot in blue,  
All Areas. \$35

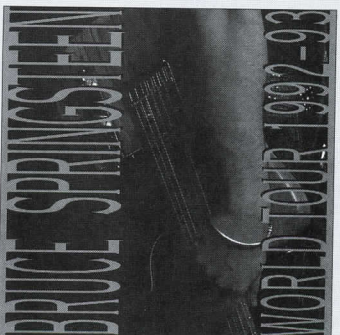
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